

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07998274 4



Z12

Washburn









Z1Z

Washburn







SERMONS  
ON  
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS;

BY THE LATE REVEREND  
*JOSEPH WASHBURN, A. M.*  
PASTOR OF A CHURCH OF CHRIST  
IN FARMINGTON.

---

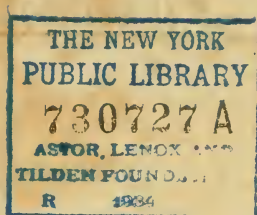
*TO WHICH IS ADDED,*  
A SERMON OF THE REV. ASAHEL HOOKER,  
DELIVERED AT FARMINGTON, ON THE OCCASION OF  
MR. WASHBURN'S DEATH.

---

HARTFORD :  
PRINTED BY LINCOLN & GLEASON.

1807.

P



District of Connecticut, to wit :



Be it remembered, That on the twenty fifth day of March, in the thirty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America, SARAH WASHBURN of the said District hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof she claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit :

" Sermons on practical subjects ; by the late Reverend Joseph Washburn, A. M. Pastor of a Church of Christ in Farmington. To which is added, a Sermon of the Rev. Asahel Hooker, delivered at Farmington on the occasion of Mr. Washburn's death."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, " An Act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of them, during the times therein mentioned."

H. W. EDWARDS,  
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.



---

## P R E F A C E.

---

THE publication of sermons which were designed for the entertainment and instruction of a common audience, and not for the public eye, after the decease of the preacher, in case his consent had not been previously obtained, is thought by some to be hardly consistent with a due regard to the character of the deceased; because, as compositions, they will usually want that judicious arrangement and correct style, which the writer himself would be solicitous to give them, if by him designed for publication.

The Editors of the following Sermons of the Rev. Mr. Washburn are ready to admit, that the objection mentioned has its weight, in relation to posthumous works in general, that are not designed by the author for publication, and has not been unattended to, in considering the expediency of the measure they have taken. Still, however, reasons

resulting from utility, more or less general, have often been considered of much greater weight, and have justly determined the question, the objection notwithstanding. Whether they have acted in view of reasons, sufficient to justify them in the present case, the candid reader will judge, when he has attended to the following things which are submitted to his consideration, and has perused the volume itself with due attention.

1. The Editors can assure the reader that they have, in no instance, presumed to alter the style in such a manner as to affect the sense of the writer, nor have they found it necessary to make but few verbal corrections; the farthest they have ventured to go, has been in a few instances, chiefly near the close of a discourse, to supply what was evidently wanting in a sentence to make it complete, which, through the hurry of writing, was left unfinished; so that the sermons, as they appear from the press, exhibit the writer *truly*, both as to matter and style. The critical reader, therefore, has the means of forming his own opinion of both. The Editors persuade themselves, he will agree with them in opinion, that the objection urged has very little weight in the present case: for, though the style is destitute of that studied ornament, which would constitute it what the scripture denominates,

“ the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” it is well adapted to the dignity and simplicity of the sublime subjects of which the writer treats, and such as any one would choose, who desires to hide himself behind his subject, or, in other words, to preach not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

2. The discourses are practical, the matter of them is weighty and solemn, and calculated to diffuse a spirit of true piety ; and the peculiar circumstances of Mr. Washburn’s death, and of the surviving family, having excited a very general and extended sympathy, with a desire of knowing further particulars of his character and labors, had prepared the way, for giving a greater and more extensive effect to the publication, than, under different circumstances, could have been expected.

3. The peculiar affection of the people of his charge which, after long contention, centered strongly and universally in him, and rendered their short connection with him both pleasant and useful, prompted them to cherish and prolong his memory, in a way which would at once be most honorable to him and useful to themselves and others ; and it could, after deliberation, find no better expression than in erecting this monument, which they hope will be more durable and

more expressive of his worth than marble, and at the same time more proper, because the deceased having found a watery grave, no monument of marble could be erected to his memory with the inscription of, *Here lie the remains of a much respected, and much lamented friend.* This affection, laudable in itself, and useful in its expression, the Editors deemed it important to gratify.

4. The ministers of the neighboring churches, with whom Mr. Washburn was particularly associated, having always esteemed him as one of the rising hopes of the Church, were desirous of an opportunity of expressing their esteem of a deceased brother and friend, and by their countenance and assistance, of giving, as it were, extension to his short span of usefulness, called off from his labors, as he was, in the meridian of life ; and to cause it to be more extensively true of him, that, “though dead he yet speaketh.” And,

5. The publication of the present volume of sermons promised to be the only effectual means of relieving Mrs. Washburn and her orphan children, left under pecuniary embarrassments, and with slender means of support, from the burden of debt, as intimated in the printed proposals for the publication ; which circumstance, as it presented a fit oc-

casion for the exercise, in this way, of an extended charity, has probably induced, more than any other circumstance, a liberal patronage of the design : and which, though last mentioned, was not of inferior consideration with the Editors in determining and prompting their undertaking : and they hope the subscribers for the volume, while they have gratified their charitable feelings and views, will find it an ample equivalent for the price of it, and will be disposed to rejoice with the Editors in the expectation that the object, with respect to the family, will be essentially realized, and to unite with them in their fervent prayers to the Father of Lights, that the other objects of the publication may, through his influence and blessing, be fully attained.

Farmington, Jan. 1, A. D. 1807.





---

## CONTENTS.

---

### SERMON I.

*Sinners opposed to faithful warning.*

2 CHRON. xviii. 7. There is yet one man by whom we may enquire of the Lord ; but I hate him, for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil. Page 13

### SERMON II.

*On hardness of heart.*

HEB. iii. 8. Harden not your hearts. Page 27

### SERMON III.

*Presumptuous sins.*

PSALM xix. 13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Page 39

### SERMON IV.

*The condition and end of the impenitent.*

GEN. xix. 14. And Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. Page 49

### SERMON V.

*The word of Christ in the hearts of believers.*

COL. iii. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Page 61

## SERMON VI.

*The importance of being established in the truth.*

HEB. xiii. 9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.

Page 73

## SERMON VII.

*Self-Examination.*

2 COR. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Page 87

## SERMON VIII.

*Saint's Reward.*

HEB. xi. 26. For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Page 101

## SERMON IX.

*The love of Christ.*

REV. i. 5.—Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Page 115

## SERMON X.

*The Church beautiful and formidable.*

SONG OF SOLOMON vi. 10. Who is she, that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

Page 125

## SERMON XI.

*God's people under vows.*

PSALM cxix. 106. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

Page 139

## SERMON. XII.

AN ORDINATION SERMON.

*Strength ordained out of the mouth of babes.*

PSALM viii. 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

Page 153



SERMON XIII.

*Frailty of man.*

ISAIAH ii. 22. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Page 175

SERMON XIV.

*Youth reminded of Judgement.*

ECCL. xi. 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.

Page 191

SERMON XV.

*Our times in God's hand.*

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON,  
*Delivered January 6, 1805.*

PSALM xxxi. 15. My times are in thy hand. Page 203

SERMON XVI.

*Psalmody a part of divine worship.*

A SINGING LECTURE.

PSALM lvii. 8. Awake up, my glory; awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

Page 219

SERMON XVII.

*Duty of praying for ministers of the gospel.*

1 THESS. v. 25. Brethren, pray for us. Page 233

SERMON XVIII.

*Rest for the people of God.*

HEB. iv. 9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Page 243

SERMON XIX.

*Abiding in Christ.*

1 JOHN ii. 6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Page 253

SERMON XX.

*The offers of salvation indiscriminate and free.*

JOHN vi. 37. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Page 267

## SERMON XXI.

*Nearness to God the saint's desire and happiness.*

JOB. xxiii. 3, 4. Oh, that I knew where I might find him,  
that I might come even to his seat ! I would order my  
cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

Page 281

## SERMON XXII.

*Importance of hearing Christ's voice immediately.*

HEB. iii. 15. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not  
your hearts.

Page 297

## SERMON XXIII.

*Assurance of hope.*

HEB. vi. 11. And we desire that every one of you do show  
the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the  
end.

Page 313

## FUNERAL SERMON.

ACTS xx. 38. Sorrowing most of all, for the words which  
he spake, that they should see his face no more.

Page 331

---

## SERMON I.

SINNERS OPPOSED TO FAITHFUL WARNING.

---

### 2 CHRONICLES XVIII. 7.

*There is yet one man by whom we may enquire of the Lord ; but I hate him, for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil.*

THESE words were spoken by Ahab, king of Israel, to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. The person respected was Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord, who, at the desire of Jehoshaphat, was called to be enquired of, as to the success of a proposed military expedition, with their united forces. The circumstances are thus given in the context :

“ Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honors, in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab. And, after certain years, he went down to Ahab, to Samaria ; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him, in abundance, and for the people that he had with him ; and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead. And Ahab, king of Israel, said unto Jehoshaphat, king of Judah : Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead ? And he answered, I am as thou art ; and my people as thy people ; and we will be with thee in the war. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to day.

Therefore the king of Israel gathered together, of prophets, four hundred men, and said unto them ; shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear ? And they said, go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand." These were, doubtless, Ahab's own false prophets, or the priests of Baal, whom he had under his control, and who were ready to prophesy whatever he should wish ; that, under the pretence of divine authority, he might have more influence with his subjects, and be enabled to carry his points. They were, probably, those very four hundred prophets of the groves, whom Jezebel had preserved from slaughter, according to the account in 1 Kings, xviii. And yet, it seems, that they gave in their answer, upon this occasion, in the name of Jehovah, and not of Baal ; doubtless, by Ahab's direction, that good Jehoshaphat might be deceived by them into a good opinion of the war.

" But Jehosaphat," not satisfied with the answer of Ahab's prophets, " said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him ? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord : but I hate him, for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil* : the same is Micaiah, the son of Imla. And the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said, " Fetch quickly Micaiah, the son of Imla."

When Micaiah came, he plainly and faithfully, in the name of the Lord, warned the king, that the enterprise would be defeated, and that, if he attempted it, he would himself fall, in battle, before his enemies. " And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee, that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil ? Then the king of Israel said Take ye Micaiah and carry him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son : and say, Thus saith the king ; Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of af-

fiction, and with water of affliction, until I return in peace."

This abandoned prince, no doubt, revealed the thoughts of many hearts, when he thus, by his words and conduct, discovered his enmity against the faithful man, who dared to announce the punishment which awaited him, from the hand of a righteous God.

What I propose, in discoursing from this text, is,

I. To show, that true prophets or teachers can never promise any good to the wicked, while impenitent, but must always prophesy evil :

II. That, like wicked Ahab, sinners, generally dislike, and harbour a persecuting spirit towards, those who faithfully reprove them, and warn them of their sin and danger : And,

III. To suggest some practical inferences.

I. The true prophets, or teachers of God, can never promise any good to the wicked, while impenitent, but must always prophesy evil.

For, 1. True teachers, those who are friends to God and his cause, and are approved and sent by him, will ever make the word of God their standard. To this they will strictly adhere, as the only source from which they are to draw all their doctrines. Upon this they will ground all the warnings, exhortations, and promises, which they address to their hearers. They will make it their great object to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men receive it *well* or *ill*.

However compassionate they may be towards their hearers, and how much soever they would rejoice, if able to prophesy good respecting them, and to say such things as would be acceptable and approved, yet, true faithfulness to God, and true compassion

and benevolence to men, will not permit them to disguise or soften the truth, or handle the word of God deceitfully. They are ready to adopt, though with much greater cordiality than *he* did, the words of Balaam, to Balak, the king of Moab, who requested him to curse Israel for him, and to prophesy smooth things : “Lo ! I am come unto thee : Have I any power, at all to say any thing ? *The word that God putteth in my mouth, that will I speak.*”

2. In the word of God, no encouragement or promise of good to the wicked, while impenitent or unrenowned, can be found. Throughout the scriptures, a line is drawn, and there are but two classes of characters, the *righteous* and the *wicked*. And the divine command, to his prophets and ministers, is, “*Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him ;*” but, “*Woe unto the wicked.*” It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” From Genesis to Revelation we find nothing but woe for the wicked. We find, that the end, the last, the final state of those, who die impenitent, shall be a state of destruction—“indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish” being heaped upon them.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied respecting the final judgment of the wicked : “Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all ; and to convince all, that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed ; and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Noah, in the old world, and Lot, in Sodom, were preachers of righteousness. They warned the people around them of the divine vengeance against sin. *Their* deliverance, and the *destruction* of the wicked around them, are represented by the apostle, 2 Pet. ii. as a proper example to be held up in every age, to warn sinners of their liability to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.



Moses represents the Most High as saying ; If I whet my my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."

The Psalmist pronounces the righteous to be truly blessed, but adds : "*The ungodly are not so*, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment. The way of the ungodly shall perish. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest. This shall be the portion of their cup."

And, speaking of the outward prosperity which the wicked often have in this life, he says : " When I thought to know this, it was too *painful* for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their *end*. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places ; thou didst cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment ? They are utterly consumed with thy terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."

The testimony of the wise Man is : " Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged ; yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God : But it shall not be well with the wicked." The idea is, that, however prosperous the wicked may be in this life, yet, that it shall not be *finally* well with them. Their existence, taken together, shall be a curse to them. "*It had been good for them never to have been born.*"

Would the time permit, and were it necessary, I might adduce numerous passages also from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all the prophets, in which they assert, that God will judge the wicked, and retribute to

them according to their deserts, which will be infinite evil.

In the New Testament we find, that Christ, the great head and teacher of the church, dwelt particularly and pointedly on this subject. He frequently brought into view and asserted the depravity, the dependence, and the consequent danger of sinners, and that "the wrath of God abideth on them." The following are some of his words : " Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. No man can come unto me except the Father; who sent me, draw him. Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life. Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." His express direction to his apostles, when he commissioned them, was, " Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; *but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"

Speaking of the nature and duration of the punishment of the wicked, he says, " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to them on his right hand; Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation



of the world. Then shall he say also to them on the left hand : Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." He adds, " And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment* ; but the righteous into life eternal."

The apostles also followed the example, and obeyed the command of their Lord, in preaching terror to the wicked, and in threatening the most awful and endless destruction to the finally impenitent. We find St. Paul, in the second chapter of his epistle to the Romans, thus addressing sinners : " Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing, that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ! But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds ; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life : But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul that doeth evil, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

In another place, speaking of that day, he thus represents it : " When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power."

I might proceed to consider the testimony of the other apostles, and the book of the Revelation, the chief design of which is, to describe the future prosperity and salvation of the righteous ; and the awful destruction of the wicked. But, I trust, you are sensible, that, were no more than a hundredth part of the

passages, in scripture, of this import, to be adduced, the *day* would scarcely suffice to repeat them. But if the whole tenor of scripture, and even of the preaching of Christ, thus carry terror to the wicked, and threaten an awful destruction to the finally impenitent, then the point proposed is established, viz. That the true prophets, or ministers of God, they *who make the word of God their standard*, can never prophesy any good to the impenitent wicked, but must always prophesy *evil*.

I proceed to observe,

II. That sinners, like wicked Ahab, generally dislike, and harbour a persecuting spirit towards, those who faithfully reprove them, and warn them of their sin and danger.

This will sufficiently appear, if we consider, a little, the nature of depravity in mankind, and advert to a few scripture texts and examples. It is evident, from scripture and experience, that it is the nature of a depraved heart, to choose darkness rather than light. Those, who “do evil, hate the light. They will not come to it, lest their deeds should be reprov-  
ed.” They even say to the prophets : “Prophesy smooth things unto us ; yea, prophesy *deceits*.” And if any one refuses to do this, and drags them to the light, pouring painful conviction upon their consciences, he fixes them his enemies. They hate him because “he prophesies evil.” Christ declares, that this was the ground of the opposition he received from the world : “Me the world hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil.” This was a testimony, which implied their danger, as exposed to the wrath of God.

His disciples he also forewarns, that they must receive the same treatment, and from the same cause. “Ye shall be hated of all men, for my name’s sake.” The reason was, that his disciples would speak the same truths, which he spake, and bear the same tes-

timony against wickedness, which he bore, prophesying evil to the wicked. He adds ; “ The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beezebub, how much more them of his household.”

The point may be corroborated, by attending to a few instances, in which faithful prophets and teachers have been hated and persecuted, by those whom they have reproved, and warned of their danger.

Elijah was a prophet of God, and faithful to declare the divine counsel, and to admonish degenerate Israel of their sin and danger. Therefore he was hated and persecuted, and particularly by wicked Ahab, who considered him as his enemy, called him a troubler in Israel, and sought his life. “ When Ahab saw Elijah, he said unto him ; Art thou he, that troubleth Israel ? And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?” 1 Kings xviii. 17. and xxi. 20.

Thus Ahab also hated *Micaiah*, as he acknowledged in the text, “ because he never prophesied good to him, but always evil.” He therefore persecuted him, and cast him into prison.

In Jeremiah we have also an eminent instance of a faithful and true prophet being hated and persecuted by the wicked, because he prophesied evil concerning them. Jer. xviii. 18. “ Then they said ; Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah. Let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.” Also xxvi. 11. “ Then spake the priests and the prophets, i. e. false prophets, unto the princes, and unto the people, saying ; This man is worthy to die, for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.” Thus, in various ways, did they plot against the prophet, and persecute him, and cast him into prison. They accused him also of perverting the divine counsel, and of prophesying falsely, merely because he prophesied evil.

We have, in the New Testament, still more striking examples of this, in the treatment, which Christ and his apostles received from the wicked, whom they warned and reprov'd. Christ was an eminent reprover of wickedness of every kind, in all ranks of people, as we have shewn. He was more frequent, plain, and full, than any other, in dwelling upon the sin of those, who reject him and his words, and the wrath that awaits them. Accordingly, he was more opposed, hated, and persecuted than any other. The chief priests and pharisees, and even the multitude, often kindled into wrath, under his preaching. They sought to lay violent hands upon him, because he represented them as under the wrath of God, and dependent for deliverance, upon the divine, sovereign mercy. Nor did they give over, till they had obtained their desire, and shed his blood upon the cross.

The apostles, also, experienced the same opposition, and from the same cause. They boldly accused the Jews of being the murderers of the Son of God. They testified, "both to the Jews and Greeks, repentance," i. e. the necessity of repentance, "towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore they were reviled, hated, and persecuted.

Thus it has ever been, to the present time. In-corrigible transgressors have always manifested, in a higher or lower degree, that, like Ahab, and like degenerate Israel of old, "*They hate him* that rebuketh in the gate, and abhor him that speaketh uprightly."

May I not appeal to your experience, my hearers, that those who prophesy smooth things to the wicked, and endeavour to lull their fears, and widen the way of life, are caressed by them, and considered liberal and benevolent? Are not those, on the other hand, who declare the whole counsel of God, and prophesy nothing but evil to the wicked, at least, neglected, as *illiberal*, and made the subjects of a kind of malicious ridicule and contempt?

Having, as I trust, sufficiently illustrated the points proposed, I shall close with a few practical inferences.

1. From what has been said, we may infer, that the wicked will be far more likely to be pleased with those, who teach error, than with those who teach the truth. We have seen that those who preach the truth, and “declare the whole counsel of God,” making the scriptures their standard, can prophesy no good to the wicked; but must always prophesy evil. As the wicked hate those, who reprove and warn them of danger, and wish rather for smooth things; the inference is plain, that sinners will, in general, be far better pleased with false prophets, than with true and faithful ones. The latter will always be denouncing woe against the impenitent. “Except ye repent, ye shall *perish*.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

But false teachers are not thus confined. They can assure sinners, that there is no need of regeneration; or that it is a mere imagination; that, if men are but morally honest, all will be well: yea, they can declare, that “there is peace for the wicked;” that they shall “not surely die;” and that it shall be finally and equally well with both the righteous and the wicked.

This is one reason, that error is so prevalent in the world. The truths exhibited in the scriptures are, every way, calculated to mortify pride, and to alarm the fears of the wicked. Revealed truth is a light, which gives sinners pain, in their present state. They therefore falsely consider it as not salutary, and shrink from it. The propagators of error have thus all the natural propensities of mankind in their favor.

We infer also, that those who support the truth, at the present day, and declare the real state of sinners—their depravity and impotency—their dependence on sovereign grace—and the judgment which awaits



them—must expect to raise opposition in the hearts of many. The divine Saviour met with opposition. Wicked men hated the light which he held up. But surely the nature of divine truth is the same now as it was then. The nature of the carnal heart is also the same. Why then should “the disciple expect to be above his master, or the servant above his Lord?”

Again. The subject suggests a clue by which to discover and detect false teachers. If, as we have seen, the whole tenor of scripture is, “*Woe to the wicked;*” and if this was a great part of the preaching of the prophets, of Christ and his apostles; then surely those who cry peace, peace, however they may pretend to draw it from the scriptures, are, nevertheless, false teachers. They are building up the cause of Satan, who, from the beginning, has endeavoured to lull sinners into security, saying, ye shall not surely die.”

Again. We infer, that it is no proof of benevolence for persons to cry *peace* to the wicked; though some seem to have imagined that it is. The advocates for universal salvation, therefore, have no reason to boast of superior benevolence. If *they* have, Satan, the great adversary of souls, may also boast, for he has preached the same doctrine, longer than they.

Nor, on the other hand, does it indicate want of benevolence, to preach terror to the wicked, and denounce endless destruction to those who reject Christ and his word. Christ, who had greater benevolence than ever man had, did this, and so did his apostles. Their followers can, of course, in no way, more evidently manifest their faithfulness to God, and benevolence to men, than in doing the same.

It is calculated, and is used as an instrument, in the hand of God, to make sinners feel a sense of their danger, and to bring them to repentance, that they may escape the wrath to come.

Finally, our subject brings into view the dangerous state of the impenitent. Are not many of you, my hearers, of this number? Have you not, all your life, rejected Christ and his words? If so, no good can be prophesied to you, but only evil. "There is no peace, saith God, to the wicked." Whatever peace you may imagine you have in the world, yet it will not endure. It will soon be turned into sorrow, and there will be nothing to support you.

Without being born again you can never see—never enjoy the kingdom of God. This is the work of God's Holy Spirit—a work for which you have no desire—no heart to ask. You are therefore dependent on the real mercy of God. May it be extended unto you, for his glorious name's sake! Amen.





---

## S E R M O N II.

### ON HARDNESS OF HEART.

---

#### HEBREWS III. 8.

*Harden not your hearts.*

**B**Y the heart, in this place, and as most generally used in scripture, we may understand the will and affections.

With respect to hardness of heart it may be observed, that the scriptures represent it as the cause of all that active opposition to the law of God, and the gospel of his grace, which takes place in the world ; as the source of all the wickedness which is perpetrated by mankind ; and as that which, if persisted in by sinners, will issue in their final destruction.

“ Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, all these evil things, come from within, out of the hearts of men ;” even from the hardness of their hearts ;—their evil hearts of unbelief. For all natural men are alienated from the life of God, and have their understandings darkened ; so we are assured by the apostle, that this is because of the hardness of their hearts.

In pursuing this subject, it is proposed,

I. To consider, briefly, what we are to understand by hardness of heart.

II. Point out some of those things which have a special tendency to harden the heart, and render it unbelieving.

III. Consider the dangerous consequences of persisting in hardening the heart.

I. With respect to hardness of heart, we may observe, that the expression is figurative. Indeed, most of the expressions, which are used in scripture, in treating on spiritual and moral subjects, have an allusion to sensible objects. Nor is there any disadvantage arising from this, but rather a benefit.

In the present case, the phrase, hardness of heart, is used with great propriety, and is very expressive. As any natural object is said to be hard, where it is unyielding, and difficult to be impressed, by other objects : So when the hearts of men are stubborn, unyielding to the commands, motives, and endearing invitations of the gospel, when they are unaffected with the divine perfections, and insensible to the beauty of the moral character of God, hardness is predicated of them. They are said to have hard, or callous hearts. *Hardness of heart therefore consists in a stupidity, unfeelingness, or insensibility to moral beauty.*

A hard heart is so far from being pleased with the divine character, and exercising correspondent feelings, that it is displeased with it, and has its affections upon objects of a directly contrary nature. The language of such a heart is, that there is no beauty, or excellency in God ; that his character is unamiable, and he unworthy to be loved.

Hardness of heart necessarily implies *impenitence*. A hard heart is directly opposite to that humble,

penitent, and contrite heart which the Most High will not despise. If our hearts be unmoved and unaffected by the divine character ; if the law of God do not appear excellent, holy, just, and good, when viewed in all its threatenings and penalties, we shall consequently be unaffected with the evil and vile nature of sin, and be destitute of that contrition and godly sorrow, which are the essence of repentance.

Again,

*Hardness of heart* implies *unbelief* of heart : yea it is the essence of unbelief. As “ it is with the heart that man believeth,” so the heart of every adult, under the gospel, is in the exercise either of a true faith, or of a criminal unbelief. To exercise hardness, or opposition of heart to the law of God and the gospel of his grace, is the essence of unbelief. But to exercise a right disposition, a right feeling, or affection towards God, is the essence of true faith. This appears from the context. The apostle, having introduced the example of the Israelites of old, who perished through the hardness of their hearts, applies it to his hearers. “ Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.” Now it is evident from the connection, that what in the text, is called hardness of heart, is here called unbelief. “ An evil heart of unbelief.” A hard heart, therefore, is an unbelieving heart. It is the opposite of that good and honest heart, which Christ, in a parable, compared to good soil, well cultivated, and prepared to receive and nourish good seed. That is, a heart pleased with holiness ; being cultivated and prepared by the spirit of God, to receive and entertain the word, with right affections, dispositions, and resolutions ; so that it may bring forth fruit, to the praise and glory of God. Hence the exhortation, “ If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Plainly implying, that hardness of heart is the only thing which prevents sinners from accepting salvation ; and that while they exercise it, they will con-

tinue unmoved and unaffected with the gospel. And here it may be observed, that though impenitent sinners have no right affection towards God, yet that the strength, or degree of their opposition is capable of being increased ; and they be given up of God to still greater degrees of hardness and insensibility ; by which their criminality and danger will be greatly increased.

II. It was proposed to mention some of those things, which have a special tendency to harden the heart, or render it unfeeling, and insensible to things of a moral nature.

1. The practice of sin in general may be mentioned. The longer any continue in the exercise of impenitence, and practice of iniquity, of any kind, the more hardened, callous, and unfeeling will they become. This is evident from *reason*, *scripture*, and *experience*.

It is evident from *reason*. We know the force of habit ; and it is rational to suppose, the very practice of sin, continuing to set at nought the counsel of God, and despise his reproof, should render the heart more and more callous, and less susceptible of serious impressions.

It is evident from *scripture*. The apostle, in the context, exhorts, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Or, as it is expressed in the next verse, "Lest any of you be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin ;" implying that so long as any, through the deceitfulness and allurements of temptation, continue under the dominion of sin, their hardness will increase. Yea, it is represented by the apostle Paul, that those who give themselves to an unrestrained practice of iniquity, may become hardened to such a degree, as to be *without natural affection*. An awful degree of darkness, indeed. Though *natural affection* is a very different thing

from *holy moral affection*, and may be possessed without it ; yet when any have proceeded so far, in an unrestrained practice of iniquity, as to root out natural affection, it must then be evident, that they are wholly destitute of holy affection, and have become hardened by the practice of sin, to such a degree as is almost beyond hope.

It is found also by *experience*, that an unrestrained course of iniquity, has a tendency to increase and establish hardness of heart. How often are persons led on by degrees, to do those things without emotion, of which, once, had they been proposed to them, they would have said with Hazael, “ Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ? ” This proves that every moment that sinners continue in sin, it becomes more familiar to them ; and if left to themselves, they will grow more and more hardened and fearless in the practice of it.

But it may be proper to mention some particular sins, which have a special tendency to harden the heart.

One is a misimprovement, or abuse of special mercies, granted in the course of providence.

The sin of ingratitude, or abuse of great mercies, is not only a proof of hardness of heart, but does, in the very exercise of it, tend especially still more to harden the heart. As the lying tongue hateth him who is afflicted by it, so does the exercise of ingratitude tend to increase the hardness and enmity of heart towards its benefactor. This is evident from Rom. ii. 4—It is there represented, that the mercy and goodness of God, have a tendency, when rightly improved, to lead to repentance ; and given for that purpose. But when misimproved it has a contrary effect. “ Or despisest thou,” says the apostle, “ the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. But after” or according to, “ thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasur-



est up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Plainly implying, that to abuse peculiar mercies, or despise the goodness of God, will peculiarly increase hardness of heart ; and also, in proportion as the heart is hardened, the future condemnation will be aggravated.

Another thing, which has a special tendency to harden the heart, is disregarding the judgments of God.

The divine judgments, which from time to time are sent upon a wicked world, ought to be noticed by sinners ; and cause them to stand in awe, and to forsake the evil of their ways. But if they have not this effect, they will have a contrary one. Thus it was with Pharaoh, of whom it is said, God hardened his heart. He did not harden it, however, by infusing any thing into his heart, which was not there before ; but by taking off restraints, and leaving him to follow his selfish, sinful propensities. In the prosecution of these, he despised the goodness of God, and disregarded his threatenings. In this way the hardness of his heart increased ; the measure of his iniquities became full, and he was destroyed. In his conduct he exemplified the inspired saying of the wise man : " Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them," that is *fully hardened*, " to do evil." Again,

An abuse of the special privileges of the gospel and means of grace, has a peculiar tendency to harden the heart. It is rational to suppose, and evident from experience, that those who are favored with great light and peculiar privileges, having the gospel in their hands, and enjoying a plenitude of the means of grace, and yet neglect and misimprove them, do thereby become peculiarly hardened. This was the case with the Israelites who fell in the wilderness. The neglect and abuse of the means of

grace they enjoyed hardened their hearts, and they were destroyed. This was the case with Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Jerusalem. This has been the case with multitudes since, and may be the case with respect to multitudes at the present day. If they have the word of God in their hands ; if they have sabbath and sanctuary privileges, and opportunities for prayer and public worship, and neglect them ; or attend upon them in a wrong manner ; and especially, if they have peculiar convictions of conscience, and resist them ; “ Rejecting the counsel of God against themselves ; ” “ The last state of such persons will be worse than the first.” Indeed, the remark which was made upon the practice of sin, in general, may be made upon every particular sin, and abuse of the means of grace, viz. that the practice of them hardens the heart.

Sinners, in early life, are under restraints from the pious advice and religious education they receive ; and in general would startle at the thought of despising, or wholly rejecting the means of grace. But if by degrees they come to slight the word of God, profane his sabbaths, blaspheme his name, and “ make a mock of sin,” their hearts become hard and they can, with great ease, “ cast off fear and restrain prayer.”

This leads to observe, once more, that associating with the irreligious and profane, has a special tendency to harden the heart. As the habits and external impressions, which are received by a religious education, put a great restraint even upon the wicked, lay them open in a measure to conviction, and render their conversion more probable, so there seems not a more direct way to remove these restraints, and harden the heart, than to choose the irreligious and profane for familiar associates. It is a maxim, founded on experience, and asserted by the pen of inspiration, that “ Evil communication corrupts good manners.” The presence and example of the wick-



ed are a temptation and snare even to the righteous : much more to those, who have no internal principle to support and guide them. At first they may be somewhat shocked, at the impiety and profanity which they see and hear. At length they will be able to see and hear them without emotion. And from this state, the transition will be easy and swift to such a state of hardness as will enable them to practise the same vices with little or no remorse.

Thus it appears, that to continue in opposition to God, and particularly, to abuse special mercies, disregard divine judgments, slight the word of God, abuse the mercies of grace, reject the light and convictions of conscience, associate with the abandoned and profane, have all a direct tendency to harden the heart. It was proposed,

III. To point out some of the dangerous consequences of continuing to harden the heart.

Many of these have been often set before you. At present I shall be very brief.

1. Sinners by hardening the heart, become more under the dominion of sin, and power of Satan. Unguarded, they are exposed to his attacks ; to be led about by him, at his will, and become less and less susceptible of any serious impressions from the gospel, and the means of grace. As it was observed, that abusing the means of grace has a tendency to harden the heart ; so reciprocally as sinners harden their hearts, they are less likely to receive any benefit from those means. It is the nature of hardness of heart, to be unmoved and unaffected by the divine character, and the things of religion. In proportion therefore as it increases, the probability that the gospel will take effect decreases, and the state of sinners becomes more and more hopeless.

2. As an awful punishment on sinners for hardening their hearts, the Most High, in his righteous displeasure, frequently gives them over to judicial

blindness, and final hardness ; declaring that they shall not enter into his rest. Such was the state of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, of Chorazin, and Bethsaida. Such was the state of those, to whom the prophet Isaiah was sent, when he received the awful commission. “ Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.”

Lastly ; as the sum and conclusion of all the evils consequent on hardening the heart, and continuing finally impenitent, let us reflect upon their situation, when trembling with guilt and horror, they shall be summoned to the bar of the Supreme Judge. Then all hope will be banished ; and they will be addressed, while calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, “ I have called but ye refused : I have stretched out my hand, but ye have not regarded. Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and despised my reproof ; therefore ye shall now eat of the fruit of your own wages, and be filled with your own devices.”

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what hath been said, we learn that hardness of heart is of a nature most vile and criminal ; and that those who exercise it are justly under the divine displeasure, and exposed to that awful and eternal punishment, which is threatened by the law of God, against finally impenitent sinners. It is enmity against God. It is the essence of impenitence and unbelief. It is called in the context, “ an evil heart of unbelief.” It is indeed evil both in its nature and consequences. What can be more evil and criminal, than for intelligent creatures to be unaffected with the divine character, and unmoved by all his commands and gracious invitations ? It is a practical de-

claration, that the Most High is not excellent, or worthy to be loved, and is rebellion against him. Nothing however is more common, than for sinners to acknowledge themselves criminal and blameworthy for their external conduct, while they plead that they cannot see how they are culpable for their hard and unbelieving hearts. But let such be assured, that whatever criminality they are guilty of, it arises entirely from the nature of their hearts. If they are not criminal, or blameworthy for exercising hard, impenitent hearts ; or in other words for being disaffected towards the divine character, and at enmity against his law ; it is impossible, that they should be criminal for any thing, or that there should be any such thing as right and wrong, in things of a moral nature. It remains therefore for sinners, either to believe the law of God unjust, in requiring the heart, and then continue their rebellion, and attempt to contend with the Most High, or else to condemn themselves, and give glory to God, and with an humble and contrite heart, rejoice in the divine character and government. This will be done, by those and those only, who by the divine influence are brought to a right discerning, and a right temper of mind.

2. From what hath been said it appears, that when we see any of our fellow men running greedily in the ways of iniquity, without restraint or apparent remorse, we have reason to fear that they are left of God, and in the certain road to destruction. Our only hope of such, is the divine sovereignty and mercy. We know that God is able to melt the hardest hearts, and bow the most stubborn wills. But were we to know that the Most High had pronounced concerning any one, as of Ephraim of old, "Let him alone," we should have no more ground to hope of him, than of the damned in hell. We should be sure, though the gospel salvation might be still offered to him for months and years, yet that he would continue to despise it, and plunge into endless ruin.

3. Our subject affords matter of solemn warning to impenitent sinners, and especially to those who are in youth. Let such beware how they live any longer in the abuse of divine mercies, or judgments, or the means of grace, or in the exercise of impenitence and unbelief. Let them seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Perhaps some of those who are in youth may live to old age. But if they live in hardness and impenitence, their state will be *nearly* desperate. For when the Ethiopian shall change his skin, and the Leopard his spots, then shall they, who have been accustomed to, or hardened in iniquity, learn to do well. There is less hope of those in youth, who are still impenitent, than those in childhood ; less still of those in middle age ; and least of all of those in old age. If there be any impenitent sinners present, who have passed through all these stages, and become old in iniquity, I would appeal to them, if their consciences be not wholly silenced, whether, as they have proceeded from one stage of life to another, they have not found themselves less affected and impressed with the things of religion, and more attached to sinful practices ? But whether such perceive it or not, through the blindness of their hearts, yet it is perceived by others, and is asserted in the word of God. May we all therefore be impressed with the divine admonition, “ Harden not your hearts.” Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For they, who being often reprov'd still harden their hearts, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.



---

## S E R M O N III.

### PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.

---

#### PSALM XIX. 13.

*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ;  
let them not have dominion over me : then shall I be  
upright, and I shall be innocent from the great trans-  
gression.*

**T**HESE words are part of a very interesting and important prayer, put up by the devout and pious psalmist, upon meditating on the purity, holiness, and extent of the law of God, and comparing himself with it.

It is a prayer very important to be adopted, by every one of us ; and is worthy of our present and frequent meditation.—Having spoken, in a most animated manner, upon the efficacy, utility, and excellent nature of the law of God, and all his requirements, he adds, “ more to be desired are they than gold ; yea, than much fine gold—sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb—moreover by them is thy servant warned ;” that is, instructed and admonished.—I am led by them to a knowledge of my sins, as being numerous and dangerous, and justly exciting the divine displeasure. According to the words of the apostle, “ *By the law is the knowledge*



of sin." Moreover, by them is thy servant warned. In keeping them there is great reward. Upon the review and consideration of the exact purity of God's law, and comparing himself with it, the psalmist, in a kind of astonishment, and with an implied censure of himself, exclaimed, "Who can understand his errors?" As if he had said, thy law, O God, is holy, just, and good, but I am a poor, sinful wretch, falling infinitely short of it, and condemned by it—my sins are innumerable, that I cannot understand them—I cannot comprehend the number, or the kinds, or all the heinous aggravations of them. Or, as expressed in another place, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, that I cannot look up—they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me." With this view, and under a sense of his dependence, and the necessity of divine influences, he adds, "*Cleanse thou me from secret faults;*" that is, from the guilt of such sins as are unknown or unperceived—sins of ignorance; and probably all such sins are respected and included under the terms *errors*, and *secret faults*, as are not properly *presumptuous sins*. For he adds in the next verse, "keep back thy servant also from *presumptuous sins*, let them not have dominion over me." *Keep back*, that is, *restrain* or *withdraw*. The word is emphatical, and denotes our natural and great proneness to the worst of sins; and the need of divine grace and restraints, as a bridle to keep us from rushing into them. "Let them not have dominion over me;" That is, let them not prevail. If, at any time, I fall into presumptuous sins, let me speedily rise again, by cordial and thorough repentance; and not give myself to the practice of them.—"*Then shall I be upright, and shall be innocent from the great transgression.*" That is, this will be an evidence of my sincerity; and I shall have the consolation, that although I am not absolutely perfect, but am encompassed with many infirmities; yet,



that I am an upright person, or such an one as thou wilt accept, or treat as innocent—in a state of justification and pardon, through him who is my strength and Redeemer, as he suggests in the succeeding verse.

Dr. Owen, speaking on this passage, observes as follows : “ The design of the psalmist here is, to be preserved in such a state and condition, that he may be upright before God. To be upright before God, is what God requires of us in the covenant of grace, that we may be accepted with him, and enjoy the promises thereof. He that is so, will be freed from the great transgression, or that abundance of sin, which is inconsistent with the covenant love and favor of God. And hereunto three things are required. 1. A constant sense and humble acknowledgement of sin. “ Who can understand his errors.” 2. *Daily cleansing* from those defilements which the least and most secret sins are accompanied withal. —And 3. A preservation from presumptuous sins. Where these things are, there a man is *upright*, and hath the covenant ground of his communion with God. And whilst believers are preserved within these bounds, though they are defiled by sin, yet there is not any thing therein inconsistent with their union with Christ.” What I propose further, in discoursing upon the words of the text is,

I. To explain what we are to understand by *presumptuous sins*.

II. What is implied in being under the *dominion* of presumptuous sins.

III. Show that those, who are under their dominion, are not the children of God, and do not enjoy his favor.

I. I am to explain, what we are to understand by *presumptuous sins*. I would observe,

That presumptuous sins, are sins against *light* and *knowledge*. They are such sins as are known and evident; and are practised with allowance and deliberation—such as are committed with a resistance against the checks of conscience, and with contempt both of God's commands and judgments. Such was the sin of David in the case of Uriah, to which he seems to have a reference, and prays to be kept from yielding himself to the dominion of such sins and miscarriages.

There are sins which are not *presumptuous*. Sins of *ignorance* are not presumptuous. We all, without any doubt, commit many sins which may be called sins of ignorance—we have no thought or idea, in the commission of them, that they are sinful; if we had, it may be we should have turned from them with abhorrence. Nevertheless, we are sinful in the commission of them, we are criminal in not discerning our duty.

St. Paul was guilty of great wickedness in persecuting the Church of Christ; yet it was the sin of ignorance. He verily thought, that in so doing he did God service. Had he believed or felt a conviction of conscience, that they were the Church of God, and with that conviction had persecuted and opposed them, his sin would have been *presumptuous*, and far more aggravated.

Again; it is doubtless the case, that persons may, at times, fall into known sins, and yet not sin *presumptuously*. A person, through the subtilty of Satan, and the strength and suddenness of temptation, may be induced to commit *known* sin, which, at the same time, he may be said *not to allow*. "For that *which I do*, said the apostle, *I allow not*." Thus true Christians sin daily, through infirmity, and the suddenness and strength of temptation—they do many things which they *allow not*, and are guilty of many

sinful imperfections and short-comings in duty ; so that they have daily occasion to say with the psalmist, " Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret faults." And this will be their language and feelings ; and in a view of their numerous imperfections and frequent deviations, they will exercise an habitual humiliation and contrition.

*Presumptuous sins* are not sins of ignorance, nor such *known* sins and imperfections, as persons may fall into, through surprise and the suddenness of temptation, while they allow them not, and do exercise a godly sorrow in view of them. But they are the sins of those, who rush, *knowingly*, into temptation, and presumptuously expose themselves, where they know there is danger. They are sins committed against light and knowledge, with deliberation, and practised with allowance. But, to prevent misunderstanding, and that those who are under the dominion of sin may not misimprove what has been said, so as to excuse and justify themselves, it may be proper to add a few words, in limitation of the foregoing observations relative to sins of ignorance. It is not all sins which we do not certainly know to be sinful, which can with justice be called *sins of ignorance*. Many imagine that they may ; and will attempt to excuse themselves for venturing upon a sinful action or practice, by saying they do not know it to be sinful ; meaning, however, no more, than that they have their *doubts*, they have not certain or demonstrative knowledge, that it is displeasing to God. When, at the same time, it is a sin against light, and against great light. They have sufficient evidence before them, to evince its sinfulness ; and they secretly think and feel it to be sinful—their consciences are secretly convinced, however they may pretend to the contrary. Such sins are not sins of ignorance. Those sins which are contrary to sufficient information and instruction, and contrary to the dictates of our own consciences, or the real

judgments of our own minds, whether we have certain or demonstrative knowledge or not, are not sins of ignorance—they are *known* sins, and utterly inexcusable ; and, when allowed, are presumptuous sins.

II. I proceed to consider, what is implied in being under the *dominion* of presumptuous sins : “ Let them not have dominion over me.”

The import of the petition of the psalmist appears to be this : Lord, suffer me not to fall into presumptuous sins ; or, if at any time I should fall into them, let me speedily rise again by repentance, and not give myself up to the habitual practice of them. Persons may, without doubt, fall into great and known sins—they may sin presumptuously, as David did in the matter of Uriah, and yet rise again speedily by repentance, and not repeat them. They may not be in the *habit*, or under the *dominion* of presumptuous sins. Persons over whom presumptuous sins have dominion, are such as habitually and deliberately indulge the practice of known sins.

III. I proceed to show, that those who are under the dominion of presumptuous sins, are not the children of God, and do not enjoy his favor.

They are not free from the great transgression—they are not held innocent or upright in the sight of God—they are not in a state of justification ; but the wrath of God abideth on them. All this is plainly implied in the text. The psalmist prayed, that presumptuous sins might not have dominion over him, adding, “ so shall I be upright, and innocent from the great transgression.” Plainly implying, that an habitual or frequent practice of presumptuous sins, is inconsistent with being in a state of justification before God ; yea, is a full evidence that we are not.

This is also according to what the apostle John taught, 1 John iii. 6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not ; that is, is not characteristically a sinner.

Which certainly cannot be said of such as are under the dominion of presumptuous sins.—It is added, “Whosoever *sinneth* hath not seen him, neither known him.” The idea the apostle meant to convey is not, that every one who is in Christ, or, in a state of justification is, strictly speaking, without sin; or that the least sin is inconsistent with being in Christ. This would be inconsistent with what the apostle elsewhere says, relative to our deceiving ourselves. If, says he, we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves: and, also, relative to the duty of confessing our sins, which supposes we have always occasion so to do. But in this place and elsewhere, when the apostle says, that those who are born of God and abide in Christ, do not sin, the meaning is that they are not sinners characteristically or habitually, and the heart as before. The original words, *ποιῶν αμαρτίας*, are very strong. They signify committing sin, as *practisers*, *workers*, or *doers* of it, of choice, like persons who make a trade of it. Hence Dr. Guyse thus paraphrases upon the place. Whosoever abides in Christ, by vital and influential union, and communion with him, as all true believers do, like fruitful branches in the vine, is not a doer or *worker* of iniquity, like other men. He doth not deliberately, habitually, or presumptuously sin. He that sinneth at this rate hath never seen him, never had any realizing view of him by faith, nor any saving acquaintance or communion with him. And this is consistent with, and in support of the proposition we are considering, viz. that those, who are under the dominion of presumptuous sins, are not the children of God, or in a state of justification with him.—Hence the apostle says, v. 9. “*In this the children of God are manifested and the children of the devil.*” That is, although the children of God have daily sins and imperfections to lament before God; yet they do not habitually practise known sins. So that it follows, as a certain truth, and may be used as a



*test*, in forming an opinion of ourselves or others; that whosoever is under the dominion of presumptuous sins, is not in a justified state—is not a child of God, but of the devil; and the wrath of God abideth on him. This is not only asserted in the scripture, but is most evident from reason. Certainly those, who daily practise presumptuous sins, can have no true love to the divine law; and if no true love to the law, no love to the divine character, or to the Saviour. And, if no true love to Christ, then no true faith in him—no interest in his righteousness, and no justification.

Having thus attempted to show what is implied in sinning *presumptuously*—in being under the *dominion* of presumptuous sins; and the state and prospects of such, I shall close with a brief application.

1. From what has been said, have we not reason to conclude, that many more of the sins of mankind are *presumptuous sins*, than they are ready to think, or are willing to acknowledge?

How ready are multitudes, both of professing Christians and others, who daily neglect or transgress the divine law, to plead in excuse, either first, that they do not know their practices to be sinful and displeasing to God; but considering their peculiar circumstances conclude they are not—or, secondly, that they do not *allow* themselves in them. But can any, who feel so much of a conviction, that any particular action is sinful, that they would not practise it, were they expecting to be called immediately to the bar of God; can such, I say, be credited when they pretend that their sins are sins of ignorance! Or, will a plea that they did not know such a course to be sinful be accepted at the bar of God!

2. How absurd is it, for those who live in the constant practice of known sins, to say, they do not *allow* sin in themselves?

How can a man, who neglects secret and family prayer—who neglects to perform deeds of charity, when he has this world's goods—neglects his bible—public worship, and that constantly, how can such an one, I ask, plead that he does not allow sin?

3. From this subject we further learn, what is necessary to an acceptable and profitable attendance upon divine ordinances; particularly the ordinance of the Lord's supper.

It is necessary that we should be free from the great transgression—that we should be upright before God; or in a state of justification and favor. It is an ordinance of communion with God and the saints. But what communion hath Christ with Belial? What communion can those have with God or his people in that ordinance? Or what benefit can they receive, who are children of Satan, and under the dominion of presumptuous sins? And it may be added, respecting such as are the children of God, being freed from the dominion of sin and Satan, that in order even to their attending on this ordinance with acceptance and profit, it is important and necessary, that they should be in an actual as well as habitual preparation.

It is a most holy ordinance, in which God comes down to meet and commune with his people. How careful ought they, therefore, to be, to seek a due preparation? And, as they are guilty of innumerable imperfections and daily infirmities, they ought carefully to search and try their ways and their hearts, and to seek the holy Spirit to cleanse them from secret faults, and from all unrighteousness.

Finally. Let us, my brethren, examine ourselves this day, whether we do not live in the practice of presumptuous sins, and even suffer them to have dominion over us. Perhaps, the most present will flatter themselves, that however sinful and imperfect



they may be, yet they do not sin presumptuously—they are not under the dominion of presumptuous sins.

But are there none present, who neglect the poor—who neglect secret and family prayer, at least very often? Are there none who neglect their bibles—who neglect public worship—none who instead of sanctifying the sabbath, spend much of it in sleep, or in idle conversation about worldly business and enquiring after news and such like practices? In a word, do we not, my brethren, practise many things, and leave many things undone, which we ought not and should not, did we expect immediately to appear at the bar of God? If so, it is in vain to pretend, that we do not practise known and presumptuous sins. It is of great importance to look critically into these things. Be not deceived, God will not be mocked. If we live in the practice of known sins, or neglect of known duty, our waiting upon God will not be acceptable to him, nor comforting to ourselves.

Let us, therefore, this day search and try ourselves, and realizing that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, let us not trust to it, nor lean to our own understandings; but seek divine assistance to try and search us, and to discover to us every false way, and to lead us in the way everlasting. And may we all adopt the prayer of the psalmist in the text and context, with which I shall conclude. *Oh, who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me. So shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable unto thee, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.—Amen.*

---

## S E R M O N IV.

THE CONDITION AND END OF THE IMPENITENT.

---

### GENESIS XIX. 14.

*And Lot went out and shoke unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*

THE city, here mentioned, was Sodom. A city which, for its wickedness and awful destruction, is held up in scripture, as a warning to the ungodly, and as an emblem of the destruction, which awaits the finally impenitent. Says an apostle, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example, unto those who should afterwards live ungodly." Again, it is said, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner, are set forth, for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Perhaps there is no one event more frequently mentioned in scripture, and held up, as a warning to sinners, than that of the destruction of Sodom. In this city, Lot, the person mentioned in the text, had taken up his residence. His character, as described

in the holy scriptures, was pious, friendly, and hospitable. He was *pious*. He was vexed with the conversation of the inhabitants, among whom he dwelt. "That righteous man, says the apostle Peter, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with their unlawful deeds." He was *friendly*. Witness his sojourning with Abram, and his amicable settlement and separation from him, when their herdsmen strove together. He was *hospitable*. Witness the account in the beginning of the context, of his treatment of the angels whom he, at first, supposed to be men and strangers. "And there came two angels to Sodom, at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot, seeing them, rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself, with his face towards the ground, and he said, behold now, my Lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said nay, but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed them greatly, and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat."

As the Lord had determined to destroy Sodom, and the cities around it, these angels were sent to give information to Lot, and to warn him to flee with his family, to a place appointed for their refuge. After they had been received, and treated as above-mentioned, by Lot, and together with him, had been abused and imposed upon, by the men of the city, it is recorded, that the men said unto Lot, "Hast thou here any besides? Sons-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast, in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great, before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake to his sons-in-law, which had married his daughters,

and said, Up, get ye out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city. But he seemed as one that mocked, to his sons in law."

The design of this discourse will be,

I. To consider the situation, conduct, and destruction of Lot's sons-in-law, the persons addressed in the text. And,

II. Shew that it is a striking emblem, or representation of the ungodly and finally impenitent.

I. We shall briefly consider the situation, conduct, and destruction of Lot's sons-in-law. And in the first place, we may observe that they dwelt in a place, wicked beyond description. A place, peculiar for every abomination. They were favored with a most heathful climate, and a happy and fruitful soil. It is compared, in scripture, to the garden of Eden. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar." But they abused their advantages, were ungrateful to God, and practised every species of wickedness. It is written of them, that the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

2. Lot's sons-in-law were, also themselves, vicious and ungodly. They joined with the rest of the inhabitants of Sodom. They despised the invitations of the angels; and the earnest exhortation of Lot, whom they knew to be a just man, a man of integrity. They chose the portion of the wicked, rather than the portion of the righteous.

3. Notwithstanding life was offered them, and they had permission, and were exhorted and urged to accompany Lot from Sodom ; yet it was not on account of any thing in them, that they were divinely noticed. They justly deserved to be destroyed with the rest of the Sodomites. They were no better, than the other inhabitants. They were invited, on account of their connection with righteous Lot. Had they owned that connection, and joined his family in their flight, they would have been saved, though, in themselves, they were perfectly ill-deserving.

4. When Lot addressed to them the message from the angels, and the exhortation in the text, they were in the most imminent danger. The city was doomed to destruction. The angels were sent, to execute the awful judgment of God upon it, and but a few moments delay was sure to involve them in its destruction.

5. They were apprized of their danger, and were warned and invited to leave the place. Lot was expressly sent by the angels, to give them the information and warning. " And he said unto them Up, get ye out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." He, doubtless, informed them, that angels were at his house, that they had given him, the intelligence of Sodom's ruin, and sent him on this message, and that they had proved their divine mission, by the miracle which they wrought, for his deliverance, in smiting the men with blindness, who attacked and surrounded his house. But,

6. They were unbelieving. They discredited his words. It is said, " he seemed as one that mocked, to his sons-in-law." That God should destroy such a flourishing, magnificent city, with all its wealth and inhabitants, that he should destroy it so suddenly that none could escape, after its destruction had com-

menced, they thought impossible, and inconsistent with the goodness of God. They considered Lot as mocking them, or as being delirious, in addressing them in such a manner, and probably scoffed at his message, and ridiculed his earnest entreaties, as a mark of weakness and enthusiasm.

7. They were, however, actually destroyed, according to the prediction of Lot, and buried in the ruins of the city. No sooner had Lot arrived at the little city of Zoar, which was appointed for his refuge, than the Lord rained brimstone and fire out of Heaven upon them. They were seized with consternation, terror, and despair. Repentance was in vain. They were consumed, by the devouring element above, and the ground, on which these abominable cities were built, sunk beneath them, and was changed into a dead sea, which remains to the present day.

8. Those sons-in-law of Lot, perished by their own folly. Even after the city was doomed to destruction, an opportunity was granted them, to escape. They were apprized of their danger, and were told that the city would be destroyed; but they disregarded. They had an important price put into their hands; but they were fools, and had no disposition to improve it. They *despised* and *wondered*, and therefore *perished* by their own folly. I proceed,

II. To shew that the situation, conduct, and destruction of Lot's sons-in-law, are striking emblems of the situation, conduct, and destruction of the ungodly and finally impenitent.

This will appear, from the following considerations.

1. The *impenitent* live in a wicked world; a world, whose inhabitants, although greatly favored of God,



and richly loaded with divine benefits, have yet arisen up in rebellion against the Governor of the world, made the most ungrateful returns for his benefits, plunged into all manner of wickedness, and exposed themselves to an aggravated condemnation. And as the inhabitants of *Sodom* were doomed to a most awful destruction, for their abominations, and their abuses of the goodness of God; so the inhabitants of the *world*, in their natural state, are under condemnation, and unless they escape to the city of refuge, which is prepared, will perish by the righteous vengeance of God.

2. The *impenitent* not only live in a wicked world, but, as is implied in the very term, they themselves are sinners, and transgressors of God's holy law, and, like the men of *Sodom*, and sons-in-law of *Lot*, are obnoxious to the divine wrath. *The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* At the *fall*, sin entered the world, and since that event, has reigned in every age, and in every heart. It is written, "There is none righteous, no not one.—There is none that doeth good, no not one.—Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit—the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness—their feet are swift to shed blood—destruction and misery are in their ways.—The way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Such is the character of the impenitent; of all in a state of nature, as drawn by the pen of inspiration.

3. Notwithstanding life and salvation are freely offered to impenitent sinners, yet, like *Lot's* sons-in-law, in *Sodom*, they are wholly undeserving of any mercy. They justly merit destruction. For the sake of righteous *Lot*, his sons-in-law, who were inhabitants of *Sodom*, had the offer of deliverance.—



For the sake of Christ, and through his atonement, salvation is proposed to impenitent sinners, on condition of gospel faith and repentance. Had Lot's sons-in-law joined themselves to him, and fled out of the city, they would still, in themselves, have been as ill-deserving as ever, and as any of those, who were left behind. And when any of mankind comply with the call of the gospel, and are joined to Christ, it does not imply that they are better than others, or have done any thing more, to recommend them to the divine favor. None have any merit. All are children of wrath. All have broken the law, and are under its curse ; for it is said, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, written in the law, to do them."

4. As the sons-in-law of Lot, when addressed by him, were in danger of sudden destruction, from the sentence denounced against Sodom ; so impenitent sinners, who are addressed in the gospel, are in the most imminent and constant danger, on account of the displeasure of God, and the sentence of his righteous law, which is passed against the ungodly.— "God is angry with the wicked, every day." For their opposition to his law, and their rejection of the gospel, his righteous indignation is kindled against them ; and so long as they continue impenitent, they are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

How uncertain is life, on the brittle thread of which, hang everlasting things ! What folly to presume upon it ! Sinners know not what a day may bring forth ; and yet, at death, continuing impenitent, they are liable to a destruction, unspeakably greater than that of Sodom.

5. Like Lot's sons-in-law, impenitent sinners, under the gospel, are apprized of their danger, and urged to avoid it. God first sent his prophets, upon this message, to sinners. He, afterwards, spake to

them by his well-beloved Son ; and he still continues to address them, in his holy word. They are warned by the ambassadors of Christ ; and not only warned, but pressed and urged, to flee for refuge, to the hope set before them in the gospel. By these means, they are informed of the extent and perfection of the divine law, of God's disapprobation of all sin, of his determination to punish the impenitent, with an everlasting destruction, and that if they turn a deaf ear *now*, they will *hereafter* cry, but cry in vain.

6. Sinners, like Lot's sons-in-law in Sodom, are unbelieving. They discredit the message, addressed to them. Lot seemed like one that mocked, to his sons-in-law. So, while the ambassadors of Christ declare to sinners their danger, while they speak of future retributions, the regions of endless despair, and the divine determination to destroy all the workers of iniquity, they are considered as mocking, as being weak and enthusiastic, and unworthy of attention.—That God is possessed of such a character as they represent, so infinitely opposed to sin, so determined to punish the impenitent with everlasting destruction, is accounted impossible. Sinners cannot believe it to be consistent with goodness, although clearly revealed in the sacred volume. Making their own feeling, therefore, the standard of judging, and admitting nothing as truth, but what they wish to be such, sinners are enabled to work themselves up into a kind of ease, or stupidity, so that they can hear and despise the most solemn warnings, and determine to continue in the city of sinful indulgence, and run the dreadful venture of falling under the wrath of God.

7. Like the sons-in-law of Lot, sinners, notwithstanding all their self-flattery and disbelief, will, finally, be destroyed in the flames of divine wrath. Their endeavouring to persuade themselves that *this* is not *true*, will not render it *untrue*. Though they

may now laugh at fear, and make a mock at sin ; yet an awful calamity assuredly awaits them. *It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah, in the day of judgment, than for them.*

Lastly. All the finally impenitent will perish, Like Lot's sons-in-law, by their own folly. They are abundantly warned of their danger. The door of the gospel is set open before them. They have a plenitude of the means of grace, "line upon line, and precept upon precept." They are told that the wages of sin is death ; and are urged by the most powerful motives, to flee for refuge, to the hope set before them, even the Lord Jesus Christ. But they set at nought all counsel, and despise all reproof, and rush on to destruction, in opposition to all the arguments of the gospel, the light of reason, and the dictates of their own consciences. Surely they will be without excuse. As the fool dieth, they die. They perish by their own folly.

Thus it appears, that the situation, conduct, and destruction of Lot's sons-in-law, are an emblem of the situation, conduct, and destruction of the ungodly and impenitent, and among other things, written of old, are obviously held up, for a warning to *us* in this age of the world.

In review of what has been said, how dangerous must we consider the situation of careless sinners ! How foolish and criminal is their conduct, and how alarming their prospects ! And is it not probable, that there are some of this character among ourselves ? We have reason to hope, that many present have, at the call of the gospel, fled from spiritual Sodom, and escaped for their life to the mountain, nor tarried in all the plain. But that there are others who linger behind, and are in a state of impenitence, cannot be doubted. For the sake of such, if they are not moved by what has already been said, I would address the words of a great and good divine, who, although dead, yet speaketh. They

were addressed to a congregation, whose circumstances were somewhat similar to ours. "There is reason," says he, "to think, that some have lately fled for refuge, to Christ. And will you, (*i. e.* the impenitent) be willing to stay behind, and be condemned to suffer, for ever, in the lake of fire? Hereafter, you will see others mounting up, as with wings, and with songs of joy, to meet the Lord. But if you remain unconcerned, you will, at the same time, be filled with horror and amazement.—It is an awful thought, that there are now some persons present, in this congregation, who will, probably, be subjects of eternal misery. There are probably some, now hearing this discourse, whom the rest of the congregation will, at the judgment day, see at the left hand of the Judge. *Now*, we know not their names—we know not what seats they sit in, nor whom to pitch upon. But God knoweth the names, and now seeth and knoweth what they think, and how much they regard the warning given them this day. We have no reason to suppose, but that some of you, my hearers, will, hereafter, see others entering into glory, with Christ and saints and angels, while you, with disappointment and despair, will be cast off. It may be, that the persons are now flattering themselves in their hearts, that it will not be they. Every one present hopes to obtain Heaven. If any thought they should fail of it, they would be greatly amazed. But as *many* will fail of it, so it is not to be supposed, but that there are some present, who will not be in earnest; who will not hearken to the call of the gospel, nor improve the price put into their hands. Tell them of the awful danger, as often as you will, and set it out in as lively colors as you will; yet they will be slack and slothful. And they will never be likely to obtain heaven, while they are sleeping and dreaming and intending and hoping, but the wrath of God will overtake them. Nor is it to be supposed, that all who

are now seeking, will hold out. Some will probably backslide. If they now seem to be pretty much engaged, it will not hold. Times will probably alter, by and by, and they not having obtained grace, there will be many temptations to backsliding, which they will comply with. Some that are now under convictions, may lose them. Perhaps they will not leave seeking salvation at once, but will come to it by degrees. After a while, they will begin to hearken to excuses, not to be quite so engaged and so constant in duty. They will begin to think that they need not be quite so strict. They will say within themselves, that they see no hurt in such and such things. They see not but that they may practise them without *any*, or besure, any *great* guilt. Thus giving way to temptation, and hearkening to excuses, they will, by degrees, lose all concern about religion, and become still more hardened in sin than before." [Thus far, the words of President Edwards.] Are they not applicable to us, at the present time? May they sink deep into all our hearts, that the awful predictions they contain may never be verified respecting any one of us. There is now, my hearers, a door open for all. In the gospel, all are warned and invited. It is of infinite importance, to attend seriously and speedily to these warnings and invitations. It may soon be too late. Death is, probably, very near to many of you; and even in life, we are liable, for the abuse of the means of grace, to be given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. Let all, therefore, be persuaded, this day, to hearken to the warnings and invitations of God, in his word, with which, in the language of the text and context, I shall conclude this discourse. "Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.—Escape for thy life—look not behind thee—neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."





---

## SERMON V.

THE WORD OF CHRIST IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS.

---

COLOSSIANS III. 16.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.*

ONE of the greatest favors, with which God has been pleased to bless mankind, is a revelation from himself, respecting his true character, counsels, and designs, and the way of life and salvation by his Son. To neglect such a revelation, or to continue grossly ignorant of the things contained in it, manifests exceeding stupidity, criminality, and ingratitude. Hence the representations in the scriptures, that it will be more tolerable for those who perish without any knowledge of the gospel, than for those who perish under its light, through inattention to it, or by slighting its offers. And hence the divine command to sinners, not to harden their hearts against the voice of Christ, but to receive his word, and let it dwell in them. The words of our text were originally addressed to professing Christians : *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom.* And they may be urged upon such, by arguments of peculiar weight ; but they belong to all, to whom the word of Christ comes. The duty enjoined in them is in-



cumbent upon all who have the scriptures ; and a compliance is of great importance. In discoursing upon the words, I shall

I. Consider the import of the exhortation they contain. And,

II. Offer reasons in support of the duty ; or show why we should let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom.

1. With respect to the import of the exhortation, I observe, that by the word of Christ, as before intimated, is meant the holy scriptures. Christ is the author of the whole word of God, as it was indited by his Spirit ; and as in the economy of redemption, it is the Son, who revealeth the Father, agreeably to the testimony of Christ himself, Matt. xi. 27. “ Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”

2. The exhortation in the text implies and requires, that we receive the word of Christ, or the truth which he has revealed, into our hearts. It is not sufficient, that we receive it into our habitations, or merely give it a place in our houses, as many do, who yet continue greatly ignorant of the truth, or wholly opposed to it ; but we must receive it into our minds—we must give it a place in our hearts : “ Let the word of Christ dwell *in* you.”

3. It implies also, that we have our thoughts and meditations much upon the word of Christ. It is not sufficient, that we have some transient acquaintance, or intercourse with it, as we do with strangers, whom we entertain for a night ; but we are to let it dwell in us—taking up its abode, as a constant inhabitant. “ Let the word of Christ *dwell* in you.” Agreeable to this, was the word of God by Moses, Deut.

xi. 18, 19, 20. "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates." This is to receive and entertain the word as a constant guest, and intimate companion of our hearts.

Again, The exhortation directs us, not merely to entertain in us some of the truths which Christ has spoken, or a partial and imperfect knowledge of his word ; but we are to let it dwell in us *richly* ; that is, copiously : having an extensive acquaintance with the doctrines, duties, and institutions, and with particular precepts, promises, and threatenings which it contains. Riches consist in abundance ; and to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, implies a full and particular acquaintance with the scriptures : or, which is the same, such an acquaintance with them, as furnishes the mind with a rich variety of subjects for delightful and profitable meditation ; rules for direction, in all difficult cases, and of promises for support and consolation in trouble. Therefore,

Lastly, it is added, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, *in all wisdom* ; or so as to have an accurate and extensive understanding of it, that we may be filled with true wisdom and knowledge, in the things of God ; and derive all that benefit from it, which it is calculated to give. This is doubtless the general import of the exhortation in our text. It is not sufficient, that we receive the word of God into our houses, or pay only a transient attention to it, at distant intervals—nor yet, that our acquaintance with it be partial, confined to a very few things, though

we might dwell much upon them ; nor would it answer the divine requirement, were our acquaintance with the scriptures to be ever so extensive, if it consisted in little more than treasuring up the words in our memories, or understanding particular passages, without perceiving their connection with the system of scripture doctrines ; but we must let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom, or understanding. In order to this, it is evident that much study of the scriptures, with patient, candid, and prayerful examination, is requisite. The

II. Thing proposed was to offer reasons in support of this duty ; or to show why we ought to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom, as here explained.

1. An obvious and sufficient reason is the command of God. This is plain, pointed, and often repeated. It was given by Moses in the Old Testament as in the passage just cited from Deuteronomy : “ These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart.” They were commanded to learn and remember them, and to meditate upon them, day and night ; and so to digest and understand them, as to be able to teach them to their children, and all under their care. In the New Testament, in addition to the express words of the text, we find God requires of his people, that they should be enriched with all knowledge, and to abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment. The apostle exhorts his brethren, Heb. vi. 1. “ To leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection :” that is, not to rest satisfied with a partial acquaintance with the scriptures, or with a knowledge of the plainest things—the first principles ; but to become acquainted with the whole system of divine truth, even the deep things of God, so far as these are revealed.

2. The reasonableness and importance of the duty enjoined in the text will appear, if we consider the character of Christ, who speaks, and the importance of the subjects, upon which he addresses us in his word. He is the glorious Son of God, who has come forth from God, and is alone able to reveal him ; as he is in the bosom of the Father, and is perfectly acquainted with his mind and will, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Does it not, therefore, greatly become us to hearken to his voice, and to let his word dwell in us richly ! Especially when we consider the important subjects upon which he addresses us—they are no less than the being and perfections of God, and all the important truths of religion ; as the creation of the world—the creation and fall of man—the immortality of the soul—the resurrection of the body—a future judgment—and an eternal retribution to the saints, and to the wicked—the way of salvation, by a mediator—the work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men—our duty to God, and the way in which we may become, in our measure, like God himself, and enjoy him for ever ! What interesting subjects ! How valuable, and how important to be known ! They are indeed the study of angels, who desire to look into these things ; and they have been the main study of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and of all good men, in every age of the world.

3. A compliance with the injunction in the text, is necessary to a comfortable assurance of hope. If the word of Christ dwell not in us, if we neglect to study it, or to meditate day and night upon the truths which it reveals ; and find our minds better pleased, and chiefly taken up with other things, we manifest a corrupt taste, and give evidence that we have no true regard to Christ, who speaks in his word. Nothing is more evident than that what our hearts are upon, will engage our earnest attention. What an ardent

affection was manifested by David, and the saints of old, to every part of the word of Christ which they then had. Their language was, Oh, how I love thy law—it is my meditation all the day, my soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy judgments at all times—the law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. But the word of God has been greatly enriched, since the time of David. If, therefore, we have the scriptures in our hands, and yet let not the word of Christ dwell in us richly, we manifest disaffection to the character of God, and of the Saviour, and to the whole plan of redemption, and the glorious things implied in it. Only in proportion, therefore, as we comply with the duty enjoined in the text, can we have a well grounded hope in ourselves, and adorn a profession of friendship to Christ before men.

4. The importance of complying with the exhortation in the text, appears from the consideration, that the word of God is a peculiar mean of sanctification. This must be an interesting motive to every Christian. Christ prayed, that his followers might be sanctified through the truth, even by the word of God, which is truth. We are taught, that the gospel worketh effectually in those who believe. But in order that the word of God may be to us a mean of sanctification, it must be understood, and received, and dwell in us richly. Would we, therefore, grow in grace, we must grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, by an extensive and critical acquaintance with his word. An expansion of the mind, by an increase of the knowledge of the truth, or word of Christ, in its various parts and connections, supplies the heart, with objects for the exercise of its affections ; and upon becoming thus enlarged, the soul is sweetly constrained to run in the way of the divine commandments.



5. The word of God is a rich source of Christian enjoyment and consolation. The habitual joy, which was possessed by the apostles and primitive Christians, arose chiefly from a knowledge and belief of the truth of God's word. To those, in whom the word of Christ dwells richly, in all wisdom, it becomes easy and natural, to teach and admonish one another, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs—singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Under all trials and afflictions, a knowledge of the word of Christ supports them, and enables them to glory in tribulation, and bears up the mind, even in the nearest views of death. But no effect of this kind can be produced by the word of Christ, any farther than we become acquainted with the scriptures, imbibe the truth, and cause it to dwell in us.

6. We ought to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom, because it will lay a foundation for peculiar usefulness in the world. It will assist and enable us to diffuse light among those, with whom we are conversant. This is an important duty. Professing Christians ought to cause the light of truth to shine, not only by living according to it, but by diffusing instruction, in the way of conversation, and by teaching those under their care. Every Christian moves in a sphere of some extent, and ought so to occupy it, as to embrace every occasion which may offer, for communicating divine knowledge, as far as possible, to those around him. The duties of a parent, and a master, particularly, include in them the instruction of those committed to their care.—There are opportunities in which all, in every station and situation, might communicate the light of the knowledge of divine truth to others, if they were possessed of it. But as it is evident we cannot communicate any thing, beyond the degree in which we possess it, the discharge of this duty, so



important, and so desirab'le to the benevolent, depends upon our compliance with the injunction in the text, to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom. In no other way can we be qualified, for teaching and admonishing one another, upon divine subjects, to profit and edification.

7. A thorough and intimate acquaintance with the word of Christ, so as to understand the system of truths which it contains, with their connection and dependence, will be a great support, in times of apostacy, when many are liable to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and to make shipwreck of faith. But without this, there is no safety. We are in danger of being led away, by the error of the wicked, and the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Even real Christians, who have some knowledge of the truth, unless the word of Christ dwells in them richly, in all wisdom, will be confused in their ideas of many subjects, and consequently be unstable, and liable often to change from one sentiment to another, to the injury both of themselves and the cause. I would only observe further, that each of the arguments now adduced is sufficient, of itself, to evince the great importance of the duty inculcated in the text. Indeed, the command in the text is sufficient; yet the other considerations now adduced, serve to exhibit the importance of a thorough knowledge of the scriptures, in various points of light, and are weighty motives to a diligent study of the word of Christ.

What remains, is an application and improvement of the subject.

1. This subject administers reproof to all such, as have the holy scriptures in their hands, and yet suffer them to lie neglected; and who continue ignorant of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The duty now enforced, *to let the word of God dwell*

*in us richly, in all wisdom*, certainly involves the study of it, because it involves a remembrance and love of the things which it contains; a delight to meditate upon them; and to make them the frequent subject of reflection and conversation. Are there not many present then, to whom our subject brings reproof? Suffer me, my friends, faithfully to address the question to your consciences. Do you study the holy scriptures? Are you familiar with the word of Christ? Is it the great and daily business of your lives, to increase in the knowledge of it, that it may dwell in you richly, in all wisdom? On the contrary, do not many of you treat it with almost total neglect? Is it not the case with some of you, who have advanced into the middle, or decline of life, that your thoughts are absorbed, from day to day, and from week to week, and even upon the Lord's day, by the cares and pursuits of the world—the thoughts of your farms, merchandize, luxuries, diversions, and pleasures? and that you are more delighted with these things, and make greater progress in the knowledge of them, than in the knowledge of the scriptures? Is it not also the case with many of you, who are in youth, and in childhood, that your minds are more engaged in the various pursuits and amusements of the world, than in the study of God's word? Though God has made you rational creatures, preserved you in life, surrounded you with blessings, put his word into your hands, and given you opportunity, even from your early childhood, to know the holy scriptures; yet have you not neglected them, and taken more pleasure in other studies, and other objects, even in vanity and folly? Now if you admit the scriptures to be from God, and that they reveal a way of life and salvation, and testify of Jesus—his person, offices, and works, as it is presumed you do, after the abundant evidence which has been set before you of their divinity, surely you must stand reprov'd by our subject, even at the bar of your own

consciences, as guilty of great impiety and ingratitude, and extreme folly ! “ And how can you escape, if you neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will.”—

- Again, are not many of you, my brethren, who profess to be Christians, to be disciples, or learners, in the school of Christ, greatly deficient in the knowledge of his word ? Are you not guilty of involving yourselves too much in the cares of the world ; so as to neglect reading and meditating upon the scriptures, and of losing a sense of your dependence, and the importance of fervent prayer for divine teaching ? In consequence of this, are there not some of you, who, for the time, ought to be able to teach others, yet almost need, that one should teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God ?

Are there not some also, who profess to be Christians, and to love the truth, who yet say by their conduct, that they have no delight in it ? Who rarely open their bibles, except upon the Lord’s day, and even then, with cold indifference, and a spirit of bondage ? Who are backward to unite in Christian conversation, or conference upon religious subjects, not only at common times, but even upon the sabbath, in the interim of divine worship ; and are more forward to join with, or at least to draw near and listen to those circles and groups of persons, who openly profane the sabbath, by conversing upon the business, the news, and the politics of the times, than to listen to, or converse with those, whose delight is in the word of God, and in the prosperity of Zion ? And who, upon other days or evenings, if their brethren convene for social prayer, and to confer up-

on the word of Christ, and hear it opened and expounded, are rarely or never present ; but, if persons of a very different description meet, and for very different purposes, will suffer no small obstacle to prevent their attendance ?

If this be the case with any among us, I would take occasion, from our text and subject, to exhort them, to relinquish their hope, and no longer to consider themselves Christians, or as having any preparation of heart, to enjoy the kingdom of God ! Let me ask such, what ground have you to hope ? What reason have you to conclude, that you have been born of the Spirit, and that you possess any true conformity of heart to God, or delight in his character, if you let not the word of Christ dwell in you, if you seldom read it, or reflect upon it, and are better pleased with the company and conversation of persons of loose moral sentiments, than of your brethren, or those who fear the Lord, think upon his name, and speak often to one another ? Surely you have none ! Be not, therefore, deceived. The tree is known by its fruit ; and the man, by whatever truly indicates his moral taste. The description given by the inspired psalmist of the godly man, as distinguished from the wicked, is that “ he walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful ; but, his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Let all, therefore, whose character is greatly diverse from this, give up their vain confidence, and remember, that they carry in their foreheads the mark of the ungodly, who are like the unprofitable chaff, which the wind driveth away, and which the fire of divine wrath will consume.

I add once more—our subject carries reproof to those parents, who neglect to instruct their children, in the knowledge of the truth, and to inculcate upon them the importance of prayerfully studying the

scriptures, for this end. The divine command is : “Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way ; when thou liest down.”—If parents neglect a prayerful daily reading of the scriptures, they have to answer for their own sins, and for the evil which their example brings upon their children. Let us then examine ourselves. Do you who are parents teach your children, and all under your care, the importance of studying the word of Christ, with prayer, as they would have it dwell in them richly, in all wisdom ? Do you teach them by example, as well as precept ? Do you daily read the scriptures in your families ? Do you call them around you, to hear the oracles of God, and to unite with you in looking up to your Heavenly Father, for divine teaching ? If you neglect this, you may be sure your children will discover your inconsistency, in teaching them to do it, and your wickedness, in neglecting it yourselves. Yea, you will probably feel the inconsistency, and soon neglect to inculcate, by precept, what you deny by your example ; and the probability is, (awful thought !) that parents and children, in such case, will go on together, in the neglect of the great salvation, till they meet at the bar of their Judge !

To conclude ; I would urge upon all, the exhortation in the text : “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom :” for “blessed is the man, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who, in his law doth meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so ; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.—For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous ; but the way of the ungodly shall perish !” Amen.



---

## SERMON VI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ESTABLISHED IN THE  
TRUTH.

---

### HEBREWS XIII. 9.

*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines : for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.*

**I**NSTABILITY, either in the doctrines or practice of Christianity, is both sinful and dangerous. If the scriptures be the word of God, in which all religious truths, of essential importance, are revealed with sufficient clearness, then all who, either through inattention or prejudice, or any other means, admit erroneous ideas ; or who halt between two or many opinions, on any important points ; or who adopt first one sentiment and then another, accordingly as they meet with persons of different ways of thinking, are criminal indeed, and in continual danger. A man who is thus of a wavering mind, ready to embrace every plausible error that presents, is fitly compared, by the apostle James, to a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Such an one is unworthy of any confidence, and unlikely to accomplish any thing valuable in the concerns of this life, but much more in the things of religion. It is



not uncommon, however, to find persons of this description. Nothing is so absurd, or so contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, but that, if it be supported with a few sophistical arguments, and an appearance of zeal, it will find adherents, at least for a season, and till some other wind of doctrine shall blow. Even some of the most important truths of the gospel, such as the divine sovereignty in regeneration—the universal and particular providence of God—the complete divinity and humanity of Christ—atonement for sinners by his vicarious sufferings—justification by faith, without the deeds of the law, and many others, are embraced and rejected by some, almost as often as they hear these subjects discussed by persons of different sentiments. Nor are there wanting those who seem to imagine, that there is nothing criminal or dangerous in such instability. They seem to suppose that it is not much matter what men *believe*, even respecting the most essential points. That men who deduce totally different and opposite systems of faith from the Bible may be equally good Christians; equally acceptable to God; and consequently, that it is immaterial which we fall in with, or how often we change from one to the other. That we shall arrive safe at the haven of rest, however tossed to and fro in our passage, and driven about, like a ship that has no anchor or rudder. But, certainly, the language of inspiration is very different from this. Of very different import is the warning in our text: “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.”

*Divers*, that is, sundry; or many different ones; embracing first one, and then another, without any stability. *Strange* doctrines; that is, (as the original signifies,) such as have been unknown, or not received by the church; as persons coming from a distance, whom we do not know, are called strangers. Thus the same word is rendered, Eph. ii. 19. “Ye are no more *strangers* and foreigners; but

fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The apostolic injunction in our text therefore is, to be steadfast in the faith formerly delivered to the saints, and all along received by the church ; and not to follow the propagators of new and strange notions. This further appears to be the meaning of the admonition, not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, from the introduction to it in the two preceding verses : " Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God ; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation ; Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." To follow new and strange doctrines, stands in contrast with this ; and it is intimated, that to depart from the faith of the church, in which they had been indoctrinated, would be practically saying, that Jesus Christ is not now the same he once was.

In the last clause of my text, the apostle enforces his exhortation to steadfastness, by saying, " For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." And he adds, " Not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." On this we may remark, that teaching to expect justification, in whole or in part, by the deeds of the law, and to observe the Jewish ritual respecting meats, and other things, with that expectation, was a new and strange doctrine ; different from that delivered to Abraham ; and from the true import of the law given by Moses ; and that those who had lived under that dispensation, and had thus understood it, were never profited by their most punctual observances of it. This is agreeable to Rom. ix. 31, 32. " But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." And Chap. x. 4. " For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The last part of my text, taken in its connection, may be understood as implying, that a principle of grace in the heart is needful, and will have great influence to preserve one firm in the true faith of the gospel.

But the doctrine of the text, designed now to be particularly illustrated, is this ;

That it is an important duty, incumbent on the professors of Christianity, to be steadfast and unwavering, in the faith once delivered to the saints.

It is proposed,

I. To explain what is implied in, or prerequisite to, our being thus steadfast in the Christian faith : and,

II. To prove the doctrine, and show the importance of the duty.

In the first place, we will consider what is implied in, or prerequisite to, our being established and steadfast, in the true faith of the gospel.

In order to our being thus established, it is necessary, I observe,

1. That we have an acknowledged *standard*, for the trial of every doctrine ; and that this standard be *the word of God*.

Without a known and allowed standard and criterion of truth, there could be no such thing as trying doctrines, or knowing what is truth. Nor shall we be satisfied and fixed what we are to believe, unless we make the word of God our standard ; and submit, in all things, to its decision. If we make our imperfect reason, or our partial views and feelings, or the judgment of other men, the standard, to the neglect of the holy scriptures, we shall never arrive at any uniform and consistent conclusions respecting religious truths ; but shall be constantly liable to call

evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness. And if, in any instances, we find the truth, we shall be constantly liable to relinquish it for error, through the want of a perfect and unvarying standard.

2. We must be thoroughly acquainted with our standard. And here the subject we considered in the morning comes in to our assistance. *We must let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom.* All necessary divine truth is contained in the word of Christ, or in the scriptures; and every thing advanced is to be tried and proved by that. "Prove all things," says the apostle, "hold fast that which is good." But how can we prove or try all things, and know what to hold fast as good, or true; and what to reject as evil, or false, unless we are well acquainted with the standard, and know how to use and apply it?

3. In order to be established and steadfast in the truth, amidst surrounding errors, and the cunning of those who study to deceive, it is requisite, not only that we be acquainted with the general contents of the scriptures, but with the system of doctrines they contain, in a particular manner.

We may find that particular doctrines are contained in the scriptures, but when we see their connection with and dependence upon each other, and that to reject one, is in effect to discard the whole, we are thereby greatly strengthened in the truth, and guarded against the most plausible arguments which can be brought against particular parts. How important therefore, is an acquaintance with the analogy or proportion of faith? or the *system* of doctrines contained in the scriptures, in times of apostacy and errors, when various winds of doctrines blow, and many are carried away, making shipwreck of faith? Without this, there is no safety.

Even real Christians, so long as they are confused in their ideas, and have not a clear view of the *system* of scripture doctrines, are liable often to change from one sentiment to another, and have the appearance of instability, to the injury of themselves and the cause.

4. As a means to continue steadfast and unshaken in the truth, it is important that we, as much as possible, avoid men of corrupt minds; whose object it is to pervert the scriptures, that they may build a system congenial to their own corrupt taste and desires. Here thousands have fallen a prey to the adversary of souls. To associate with those who deny and oppose the truth, and hearken to their words, with a kind of *willingness* to have them true, because we delight not in the truth of God, is to place ourselves greatly in the power of the tempter, and provoke God to give us over to blindness and hardness, to believe a lie. Hence it is that we are so often warned of the wiles of the adversary, cautioned against deceivers, and directed to associate and converse with those who love the truth. This leads me to observe,

5. That a most essential and important requisite to our being established and continuing steadfast and unshaken in the truth, is a *principle of grace in the heart*.

The importance of the heart's being established with grace, in order to the mind's becoming settled in the belief of the truth, and continuing in it, will appear from the following considerations.

1. Grace in the heart will naturally influence the mind to enquire after the truth. Divine truth is food to the gracious mind. It longs for it with the keenest appetite and relish. Thus, as David did, every gracious heart longs for the word of God, and prizes it more than thousands of gold and silver.



2. Grace in the heart, in proportion as it reigns, destroys those things which lead men to avoid the light. The corrupt appetites, lusts, and passions of men, render them opposed to the light of truth, and disposed to pervert or deny it. But grace tends to destroy these lusts and evil propensities of the soul, removes prejudices, and opens the mind to receive and rejoice in the truth, whenever it appears. Were grace perfect, the love of the truth would be perfect. Indeed, grace in the heart is but another word for love to the truth, respecting God and religion.

3. Grace in the heart, enables a person accurately to discern and distinguish truth from error.

If of two particular kinds of food or fruit, we have a peculiar appetite and relish for one, and dislike for the other, we can very quick distinguish between them, and every thing that savors of them. Thus grace in the heart, which is an appetite or love for the truth, will render us discerning with respect to truth and error, and enable us to distinguish accurately between them. Those who have grace in their heart, or a love of the truth, are led to be much conversant with the truth ; examining the scriptures, and comparing every thing with that standard ; and so, “ by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

For the same reason, grace in the heart will render the memory tenacious of the truth, when it is discovered and known. Wicked men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore they forget him and his word and ways. Nothing is more evident, than that the more we take complacency in any objects, the more apt we are to retain the remembrance of them in our minds. The great reason, undoubtedly, why men so soon forget what they have learnt, concerning God and Christ, the law and gospel, and are easily led into divers and strange doctrines, on religious subjects, is the depravity of their hearts.



This leads me to observe, lastly, that grace in the heart regulates the life, and thus renders the great truths of revealed religion, instead of being painful, delightful to men. When the hearts of men are renewed by divine grace, they keep the commandments of God, and his commandments are not grievous. The purity of the divine law, as well as the grace of the gospel, speaks peace and comfort to them. With the ungodly, it is altogether the reverse. Hence, as our Saviour hath said, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

Thus the importance of grace in the heart, and its leading men into, and continuing them in, a firm belief of the truth, appears, as it implies the love of the truth, removes prejudices against it, renders the mind open and candid in searching the scriptures, enables persons more readily to understand the doctrines they contain, makes the mind more tenacious of them when understood, and causes obedience to the truth, as well as an attention to it, to become a delightful service. I proceed,

II. To prove the doctrine laid down, and show the importance of the duty, of being established, and continuing steadfast in the faith. On this we may observe,

1. That God requires stability in right religious opinions, and manifests his pointed displeasure against such as are wavering or unsettled, in believing the truths of his word.

In addition to the command in our text, we may adduce the words of the same apostle, 1 Cor. i. 10. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same

thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." This exhortation evidently implies, that there is but *one* consistent scheme of doctrines in the word of God, and but one right judgment, which can be made respecting them : that there is sufficient light and evidence to lead every candid and unprejudiced enquirer, into all essential truth ; and consequently, that all those who are wavering and unsettled in the truth, sometimes believing one thing and sometimes another, being carried about by every wind of doctrine, are entirely without excuse, and greatly reprehensible in the sight of God.

Again, we are exhorted by the apostle Peter, to " be sober and vigilant, because," says he, " your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." The apostle adds, " Whom resist *steadfast in the faith.*" This supposes that Satan and his adherents would be pleased to see us unestablished and unsettled, with respect to the great doctrines of the gospel ; and will endeavor to lead us into such a state. But we are commanded to resist him *steadfast in the faith* ; being unshaken, and not tossed to and fro, as children, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. And God's disapprobation of those who are unstable in the truth, and carried about by divers and strange doctrines, is strongly expressed by the apostle Jude ; who denominates them, " clouds without water, carried of winds ; raging waves of the sea, and wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

These few passages, together with our text, abundantly establish the doctrine, and evince the importance of the duty of all, to become acquainted with the system of truth in God's word ; and to be established and unwavering in the belief, profession, and practice of it.

But this will be further evident, and the great importance of the duty more fully appear, when we consider,

2. That to bring men acquainted with the system of gospel truth, was one principal end for which the word of God, and a preached gospel were given. The scriptures not only in many places exhort and command us to be settled and steadfast in the faith, but a principal end of giving the word, and especially the institution of a preached gospel, was to settle and establish men in the truth, and keep them from fatal delusions. Thus we are told, Eph. iv. 11, 12. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" and ver. 14. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" Now, certainly, that which God not only requires, but for the attainment of which he has given such ample means, must be a matter of high importance. And if any, through a neglect or an abuse of those means, fail of attaining this end, they must be without excuse before God.

3. To be established and unwavering in the doctrines of the gospel, is the Christian's excellency and honor. Every unestablished and wavering Christian, if any such there can be, may be addressed in the words of Jacob to Reuben, his first born: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." There can certainly be no strength or excellency in instability; there can be nothing in it but weakness and meanness. On the contrary, to be established in the truth, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, in the spirit of meekness, is an excellence in

the character of the professing Christian. It was so considered by the apostle Paul ; writing to the Colossians, he says, " Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the *steadfastness of your faith in Christ*. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him ; Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught." Hear also to this purpose, the words of the apostle John, in his short letter to the elect lady : " I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." And again, in his epistle " unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom," says he, " I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish, above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth : For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came, and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth."

4. To be steadfast in the Christian faith, is necessary in order to growth in grace. Says the apostle to the Ephesians, in a passage partly forecited, " That we henceforth be no more children.—But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." While unstable as water, and ready to change with every wind of doctrine, we shall be so far from growing up into Christ in all things, as the head, that we shall make no progress in grace, or in the divine life. Persons who are continually changing from one opinion to another, are like trees or plants, which, being often transplanted, have not time to take root, and grow, and bear fruit, let the soil be ever so good.

Lastly, to receive the truth, and persevere in it, that is in a firm belief of the essential doctrines of the

gospel, is necessary in order to the salvation of men. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved. To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life : But unto them that are contentious, and obey not the truth—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish ;" in "the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Thus I have attempted what was proposed. With respect to what is implied in, or prerequisite to, our being established, and continuing steadfast and unshaken in the faith, it has been observed, that we must submit to the word of God, as the standard for the trial of every doctrine—that we must be thoroughly acquainted with that standard—that we must be acquainted, not only generally with the scriptures, but particularly with the several parts of that system of doctrines which they contain—that we must, as much as possible, avoid men of corrupt minds, not sound in the faith, whose object is to bring down the word of God to their erroneous feelings and ways—Lastly, and very especially, that the heart must be established with grace ; implying a readiness to receive the truth in love.

The truth of the doctrine, and importance of the duty, we have argued—From the express command of God—and from the considerations, that this is one principal end for which the scriptures and a preached gospel were given—that a compliance is the Christian's excellency and honor—that it is necessary to growth in grace, and to any comfort in religion ; and that to receive and abide in the truth is absolutely requisite in order to final salvation.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. We infer from this subject, that being unstable, doubtful, or erroneous, respecting the great doctrines of the gospel, is a very strong evidence that a man has no grace ; or that his heart is not right with God.



John vii. 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

2. We may hence learn not to wonder, that there are so many who are carried away with false prophets, who are zealously propagating very erroneous opinions. Nothing less can be expected, concerning such as make not the word of God their study, and their standard ; but instead of it, set up their own reason, blinded by corrupt passions, or the fallible opinions of men, as their guide in religious matters ; concerning such as associate with those who are devoted to infidelity, or to loose principles—or concerning any who are under the dominion of a wicked heart.

3. Let us hence learn to make the word of God the rule of our faith and practice. Let us endeavor rightly to understand the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. Let us earnestly seek to God for the guidance of his good Spirit ; and for an honest and good heart, to disrelish error, and love the truth. Let it be your labor and care, my brethren, to attain these things. To assist you in this, is one great object of all my public labors and discourses ; but with a more particular view to this, I purpose, by divine leave, to address to you a series of sermons upon some of the leading doctrines of scripture, in their connection ; and hope to enter upon them the next Lord's day. I ask your prayers for divine light and teaching ; and that we may all receive the knowledge and love of the truth, that we may be saved. Amen.

H





---

## SERMON VII.\*

### SELF-EXAMINATION.

---

#### 2 CORINTHIANS XIII. 5.

*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves : know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?*

**T**O be *in the faith*, is to be the subjects of a true faith in Christ, or a principle of true religion. And it is important, my brethren, that ye should be possessed of this principle, and that we have a knowledge of it : for whatever our hopes and professions may be, if we are not in the faith, or which is the same thing, if *Christ be not in us* ; i. e. by his Spirit ; or formed in us, we are in the language of the text, *reprobates* ; i. e. counterfeit, adulterate, or unsound and insincere Christians : mere professors, who are not owned or accepted of God.

The term *reprobate*, and the phrases, *examine yourselves*, and *prove your own selves*, are figurative, taken from the practice of goldsmiths, who try and

\* Delivered at a lecture preparatory to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, August 2, 1804.

prove the gold presented to them ; the weight of it by the scale, and the purity of it by the fire. And as reprobate metals are of no value, so professing Christians, who have not the grace of faith in them, more precious than gold that is tried, are unapproved of God, and rejected.

One expositor supposes, that the term *reprobate* implies the same thing as *castaway*, as the word in one place is rendered ; or being given over to judicial blindness. And the remark, and the application he makes of it, are in the following words : “ The apostle here useth a very close argument, to put them upon a search into their own hearts and states, to see if they could find Christ dwelling in them ; for otherwise, (considering their long profession, and the revelation of Christ to them) it would be a ground of fear, that they were such as God had cast off for ever. However as to their *present state*, they had no ground to conclude better, whatever mercy God might afterwards show them. Men’s sitting and continuing so long under the means of grace, and an outward profession, without a saving knowledge of Christ, is not indeed an infallible sign that he, who formed them, will never show them any favor ; but there is very great *presumption*, that it will be so with such.” And to such a general application of the phrase, I have no objection. For while it is true, as I have stated, that as reprobate metals are of no value, so professing Christians, who have not the grace of faith, are worthless, and are at present unapproved of God, and rejected. It is also true, that there is great reason to fear of such, far greater than of most others, that they will never be the subjects of mercy, but will be left to a reprobate mind, or judicial blindness, and perish ; and that, not only because the sins of such are peculiarly aggravated, but because it appears from fact, to be very rare, that persons, who once settle down upon a false hope, are ever brought off from it.

By the exhortation in the text, the apostle advised the Corinthians, instead of enquiring after the proof of Christ in him, to examine whether they were in Christ themselves ; intimating to us this truth, that they are usually most backward to examine faithfully the state of their own souls, who are most forward to enquire critically into the spiritual state and condition of their brethren.

“ You seek a proof of Christ in me,” says the apostle, but he adds, as a more proper line of conduct for them, “ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves ; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates ?”

There are weighty and important reasons, to support this exhortation, in application to all professing Christians.

I. It is practicable. It may be known by us, whether we are in the faith. If we are not, we certainly may know it ; and if we are, assurance of it is attainable. Many seem practically to declare, that they can determine what other people are ; whether they are in the faith : and in some instances, indeed, a very probable judgment or opinion, may be formed : but surely, persons must be under much better advantages, to prove and ascertain, what they themselves are.

Certain knowledge cannot be had respecting others, but of ourselves it may. Of others we judge, only by their fruits ; if these are bad, we may know indeed, that the tree or heart is bad ; but external fruits may appear to be good, in many instances, where the heart is not, and we may be deceived. But with respect to ourselves, we can judge of our internal exercises and motives of action.

That we may know whether Christ be in us, and that an assurance of a personal interest in Christ is attainable by Christians, is evident from the history

we have in Scripture, of particular saints. It appears to have been a common attainment. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and others, were assured of the divine favor, by express revelation. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another." Christ informed his disciples, of the certainty of their salvation; and said that he did this to the end, that their joy might be full. The apostle Paul said, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that day."

It would be endless to notice all the places, in which the apostle speaks of himself, in the language of full assurance.

That assurance is attainable by Christians, is evident also, from the nature of the covenant of grace; and God's declared end, in the ordering of it. The covenant is ordered in all things and sure. The promises are full and often repeated, and exhibited in various ways; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed it with an oath. His design in all this, he assures us, is that the heirs of the promises may have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. "Wherein," says the apostle, "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us." But all this would be in vain, as to giving strong consolation to the saints, and a hope of future glory, if a knowledge of their being interested in these sure promises were not in ordinary cases attainable. However sure the divine promises may be, yet they cannot give strong hope and comfort, to any particular person, unless he has evidence that they are made to him. And in vain is

provision made in Christ, that believers might be made perfect, as to the *conscience*, as signified by the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable. I only add, that Christians are expressly commanded to know their state ; to give diligence to the full assurance of hope ; to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure ; and in the words of our text, it is spoken of, as an argument of something very blameable in Christians, *not to know whether Christ be in them or not*. “ Know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ? ” This then is a consideration, which shows the reasonableness and importance of the command, to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith, viz. that *it is practicable*. It may be known by us, whether we are in the faith. A full assurance of hope is attainable.

II. A knowledge of our state, so as to have a rational confidence, can be obtained in no other way.

Some have imagined, that persons may have a knowledge of their state, and be assured that they are in the favor of God, without any particular examination, or bringing their affections and exercises to any test, to *prove them*.

They suppose that they may know that they are the children of God, by the Spirit of God, witnessing with their spirit, by some special impulse, or by applying some text of scripture to them : as, “ Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee ” : or by some dream, in which the Saviour seems to come to them, and speak comfortably to them ; and in various other similar ways.

But a confidence of being in the favor of God from such grounds, is a wicked presumption. When persons appear to be confident in this way, and on such a foundation, it is a very strong evidence that



they are unacquainted with their hearts ; have never seen the plague of them ; and are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. As it is necessary to possess faith, a faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, in order to justification in the sight of God ; so to be rationally assured of our justification, we must, by careful examination, and proving ourselves, find the evidence of such a faith, in the genuine fruits and effects of it. On the supposition that we have a true faith, and a saving knowledge of Christ, yet we cannot know that we know him, or are savingly united to him, only by careful self-examination, and proving our own selves, by the test which he has appointed. Without this, a conclusion that we are the children of God, is mere presumption.

III. In this way, and in this only, i. e. by carefully examining and proving ourselves, can we gain satisfaction, as to our preparation for attending on the special and sealing ordinances of Christ's house. It is not required, indeed, that persons should refrain from an attendance on these ordinances, 'till they have obtained an undoubting knowledge, that they are in the faith, and the true children of God. But it is certain, that a preponderating, or prevailing hope must be obtained ; and how can this be obtained, without examining and proving ourselves by the word of God ?

Particular self-examination is incumbent on Christians, also, who have been long established in their hope, with respect to such a particular occasion ; the nature, import, and design of the ordinance, and their own present and actual preparation to attend upon it. " Let a man examine himself," says the apostle, " and so let him eat : " i. e. let him come after a careful self-examination has given him a fresh view, of the design of the ordinance ; an encreasing desire for communion with God, and his people therein ; and a

hope of his own preparation to come, discerning the Lord's body.

IV. Without a compliance with the exhortation, to examine and prove ourselves, and in this way obtaining a comfortable, well-grounded hope of our acceptance with God, we cannot receive comfort from the promises, nor in so free and filial a manner approach the throne of grace, and have communion with God in his ordinances, even on supposition that we are real Christians.

As the hope of the Christian is of a purifying nature, and is as an helmet, and as an anchor to the soul, so in such degree, as the assurance of hope is attained, may we expect there will be an increase of animation and comfort, in all divine ordinances.

This day, my brethren, and the remainder of the present week, are a very proper time, for the practice of the duty inculcated in the text.

If we are expecting the next sabbath, to partake of the symbols of the body and blood of the Son of God, thereby professing ourselves to be in the faith, and that Christ is in us, the hope of glory, it becomes us to remember the divine direction, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

And if any of us are not expecting to do this, not being the professed friends of Christ, it becomes such to examine, whether they are his friends or not; to prove and know themselves, whether they are in the faith; and not let so important a question lie undecided and neglected, as whether they are qualified to observe the command of the Saviour; that last and dying command to all his true friends, "this do in remembrance of me;" a command and institution, given with a special view to the comfort and quickening of his people. With a desire to

quicken my own mind, and yours, my brethren, and to assist, by the blessing of God, in the performance of the duty enjoined, suffer me to add to what has been already suggested, the following things.

1. In examining and proving ourselves, it is important that we bring ourselves to the right test, and that is the word of God. Let us compare ourselves with the scriptures, and not with our brethren, to judge of our moral state. Many seem to adopt the latter as their test. They compare themselves with their neighbors, and not with the scriptures, and the example of Christ. They look to the conversation and walk of professing Christians, and if they find it externally as lax as their own, they seem to feel safe ; at least a greater safety, than if it were otherwise. And as such are willing to have the standard as low as possible, and feel safe in proportion as others depart from the path of duty, they are prepared to watch the conduct of their brethren and neighbors, with a critical and partial eye ; and even to hearken to slander and detraction, and lend a helping hand. This is not only the practice of a great number of persons, who make no pretensions to religion, and who take a peculiar pleasure in getting something against those who do ; and in reporting it with exaggeration ; and who in their social visits make this their whole employ, and seem to be delighted with nothing else ; but it is too much the case, with some professing Christians, that, like the Corinthians, they seek a proof of Christ, in their brethren, rather than in themselves. And their favorable conclusions of themselves, are drawn rather from comparing themselves with others, than the word of God. Let us beware, my brethren, of such conduct. Let us seek rather to know ourselves than others, and let the word of God be the standard. For the testimony of the apostle is, that they “ who

measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves are not wise."

2. In examining and proving ourselves, with a view to know our state, and attain to an assurance of salvation, let us be careful to understand the nature of Christian assurance. Let us remember that the highest, or most full assurance, is consistent with great remaining corruption, and a deep and affecting sense of sin and vileness, and is always accompanied with such a sense. Though there must be evidence of a work of sanctification, being begun in the heart, in order to an assured hope of salvation, yet it is not necessary to such a hope and confidence, that we should suppose sanctification completed, or that we should have a high opinion of our spiritual attainments, or feel that we are eminent Christians. A person may have an assured hope of salvation, and yet at the same time have a very low opinion of himself, and be deeply affected with a sense of his vileness, and low attainments in grace; and view himself as among the least of God's children, and not worthy to be numbered among them, on account of the weakness and imperfection of his graces: and this is ordinarily the case. And when there is a different appearance in a person, it is a strong sign that he is deceived, and that his assurance is a presumptuous one.

3. In looking for marks of grace, and evidences of being in the faith, and entitled to eternal life, let us look to those things which are distinguishing, and which are not common to true Christians, and to hypocrites. There are many things, possessed by all real Christians, which are also very often possessed by hypocrites. Though the want of these, therefore, is evidence against a person, and ought to be set down as such, yet the possession of them is no evidence in his favor. For instance, a strict attend-

ance on the external duties of religion, this of itself, is no certain evidence that we are in a state of grace, but the want of it, is full evidence that we are not.

I will here, by way of specimen, mention two or three things, which it is very important we should pay particular attention to, in order to prove and know our own selves, and whether Christ be in us.

(1.) Love to the brethren. This is particularly pointed out in scripture as an evidence of grace. Says the apostle, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." Let us try ourselves, therefore, by this, Let us, my brethren, examine whether we love the children of God; and whether we have a complacency in them, on account of the image of God, which is renewed in them. We profess to love the people of God; but do we love in word only, or in deed and in truth? Says the apostle, when pointing out a way to attain assurance, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, i. e. in profession only, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

Let us examine ourselves, my brethren, whether we have this ground of assurance, that the love of God dwelleth in us.

With a view to this, suffer me to put a few questions to your consciences and my own.

Are you willing to communicate this world's goods to your brethren, as they, by the providence of God, have need, and you have ability?

Are you willing, when a brother is slandered and abused, in respect to his reputation, to speak for him, and support his good name, frowning upon backbiters and tatlers? Do you love the brethren so well, that when any of them neglect plain duty, or transgress plain commands, and walk unbecoming their profession, you can go to them, and in a spirit of meek-



ness, endeavor to restore them even when you have reason to fear that it will not be well received, but may make them your enemies ; and when you know that it will bring an odium upon you, and a charge from the world, and perhaps from some of your brethren, of being precise and superstitious, and intermeddling with that which is not your business. Yea, do you love them so well, that when all other steps have been taken without effect, you can hold up your hand, to cut them off from the communion of the visible Church, and treat them afterwards with a peculiar neglect, refusing all such intercourse with them, as may look like complacency in them, or desiring to associate with them ? If we can do this, my brethren, we may hope that we love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. But if we cannot do this ; if we can see our brother have need, whether temporal or spiritual, and not open our bowels of compassion to him ; if we can open our ears to backbiters and slanderers, or assist in spreading the tale of scandal ; if we can suffer sin upon a brother, and not reprove him in any wise ; and where incorrigible, can through fear of opposition, or trouble, or reproach, refuse to cut him off, and treat him with neglect, where is the evidence of our love to him ? Surely there is none at all. We act an unfriendly part to him, and that contrary to our most solemn vows. And how in such case dwelleth the love of our brother, or the love of God in us ? If this point of trial, viz. love to the brethren, and the proper expressions of this love, were thoroughly understood, and faithfully applied to themselves by professing Christians, many, it is to be feared very many, would see less reason to think favorably of their state, than they imagine they now see !

(2 ) Love to the word. It is essential to the true children of God, to love his word ; to delight in divine truth ; and to desire “ the sincere milk of the



word." They take the word of God for their heritage. Their language is, as expressed by the inspired Psalmist, "Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth! Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, they are the rejoicing of my heart."

Let us examine, therefore, whether we thus love God's word. Do we take it for the man of our counsel? Do we delight to meditate in it, day and night, and find it as sweet food to our souls?

(3.) A respect to all the divine commands. "If ye love me," says Christ "keep my commandments. If a man love me he will keep my words." The children of God view all his requirements as reasonable, and desire to obey them. To live in the allowed and habitual neglect of any, is inconsistent with having the love of God. Christians, it is true, are imperfect; but their imperfection consists in the defective manner, in which they perform duty; and in such sins as are the effect of sudden temptation, or of their inattention to examine what, in particular cases, their duty is, and not in the known and habitual practice of any sin. The apostle testifies, that "Whosoever offendeth in *one point*," i. e. allowedly and habitually, "is guilty of all." By such offending he shows himself destitute of love to God. Agreeably to this, is the prayer of David in the xix Psalm, that God would not suffer presumptuous sins to have dominion over him: to which he adds, "then shall I be upright," i. e. in a state of acceptance with God: implying that otherwise he should not.

It is important, therefore, brethren, that in proving ourselves, this day, and this week, we should examine whether we do not live in the allowed and habitual, or frequent practice of some known sin. If we do, whatever other marks we may imagine we discover

in our favor, this will prove that we are reprobates, or unsound, insincere professors.

I only add, that in proving ourselves, whether Christ be in us so that we are his, and interested in his salvation, the great point to be determined is, whether we have the Spirit of Christ. Says the apostle, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But what is the Spirit of Christ, in opposition to the spirit of the world? It is a spirit of humility, of meekness, of gentleness, of forgiveness, and mercy.

Let us examine, therefore, whether we possess, and exercise these graces; whether we have "received of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace."

Are we meek and lowly, ready to give to all their proper place? Are we patient under injuries, long-suffering, ready to forgive, and to render good for evil, and to "overcome evil with good?" If we are not, but are haughty, revengeful, unforgiving, and unmerciful, we are not the children of our Father in heaven, neither have we the Spirit of Christ.

As to a forgiving spirit, Christ has given it to us, both as a negative and positive evidence in the case. He expressly teaches us, that if we are of such a Spirit, it is a sign that we are in a state of forgiveness with God, and that if we are not of such a spirit, we are certainly not forgiven of God. And he has taken care that we should always bear this in mind, by teaching us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" adding, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Be exhorted, therefore, my hearers, to attend to the duty enjoined. It is important, as appears not only from what has been said, but from various other considerations too numerous to mention. Let me barely remark, that it is important we should examine

ourselves, because we are liable to be deceived, and because we know many others are deceived, through unfaithfulness to themselves ; and thus go on to destruction, with a lie in their right hand. Unhappy mortals ! Wretched condition ! How dreadful to be deceived, and to have the “ hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish, and be as the giving up of the ghost !”

Peculiarly important is the duty to real Christians. It is a great advantage to them. Careful self-examination, and bringing themselves to the test of God’s word, serve to show them their dependence, their deficiency, and their need of divine assistance ; and excite in them an ingenuous shame and godly sorrow, for their short-comings in duty. “ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul :” and it is important for Christians to make this use of the law ; to bring themselves to it ; and to learn their deficiency, and need of going continually to Christ.

Hence also, we see the advantage of self-examination, as preparatory to the celebrating of the sacrament of the holy supper. We thus see and realize what we want, and what Christ is.

Let us all, in view of the deceitfulness and wickedness of our hearts, and the need of divine help, address ourselves to God, in the words of the Psalmist, “ O Lord, who can understand his errors ! Search me, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

---

## S E R M O N VIII.

### SAINT'S REWARD.

---

#### HEBREWS XI. 26.

*For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

**M**OSES, to whom the apostle refers, was a true believer in Christ, as the expected Messiah, and by his fortitude and perseverance in the midst of afflictions, and in view of the most alluring temptations, he gave a proof, that “this is indeed the victory, which overcometh the world, *even our faith.*” This appears from what precedes, and follows the text. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh’s daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” Such was his faith in the Messiah, who was to spring from the seed of Abraham, and be a Saviour for sinners ; and such was his view of the glorious character of God in him, and desire to enjoy him, that he considered the heaviest contempt, derision, and persecution, which could be inflicted upon him for his faith in Christ, as unworthy of notice, in comparison with the hope set before him—“for he had respect unto the recompense of the

reward." With an eye of faith, he looked off from all the riches and allurements, which the court of Egypt held out to him, on the one hand, and looked beyond all the temporal hardships, which were threatened him, on the other, and was supported and animated by the immortal crown of glory, which he realized as reserved for him in heaven. This is the character of the faithful in every age. Every child of God, according to his measure, rises superior to the frowns and flatteries of time and sense, fixes an eye upon the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and by the victory of faith, overcometh the world.

In discoursing upon the text, we may in the

I. Place, remark, that there is a glorious reward held up to the saints, which will abundantly recompence for all their afflictions and sufferings in the cause of Christ.

II. Consider the nature of the reward, or in what it will principally consist.

III. Show what is implied, in having respect to it. And,

IV. Show, that the reward bestowed, implies nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of grace.

I. We remark, that there is a glorious reward held up to the saints, which will abundantly recompence for all their afflictions and sufferings in the cause of Christ. The children of God have their way thick set with evils. The way of religion is the way of the cross. Christians are often involved in great distress and affliction, for their adherence to Christ and his cause, being despised and persecuted for righteousness' sake. Many, in one age and another, have had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings,

of bonds and imprisonments, have been stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, have wandered in deserts, mountains and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. But verily, there is a reward. Notwithstanding the opposition of Satan and the world, there is a glorious reward held up to the saints, the view of which animates them in their course, and will abundantly recompence for all the afflictions and crosses, to which they can be called for religion.

That saints will be rewarded, and that according to what they do and suffer for Christ and his cause, will appear by reciting a few passages of scripture. Saith the psalmist, "The righteous shall rejoice, verily there is a reward for the righteous." Saith the apostle in the context, "He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Christ himself, in his epistles to the seven churches of Asia, promises eternal life, under various forms of expression, to those who should overcome the temptations and persecutions of the present life. And to his disciples, when on earth, he said "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake"—great is their reward in heaven. Let us therefore in the

II. Place, consider the nature of their reward, or in what it will principally consist. We may remark in general, that the reward, which will be bestowed upon the saints, will consist in their being made perfectly happy in heaven, with an holy and heavenly happiness. It can, therefore, be relished and enjoyed only by holy beings. Its sources, to the unholy and selfish, could they have access to them, would give no satisfaction, but be sources of pain.

Much might be said respecting the nature and fulness of their happiness—a few particulars only, can be suggested at present.



One thing implied in the reward, or happiness held up to the righteous, and in which it will greatly consist, is their being freed from the body of sin, and perfectly conformed, according to their measure, to the holy character of God. To see God, the Mediator, and be made like him, is the object of the Christian's hope, and his strongest desire. "Behold," saith the apostle, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." This conformity to Christ, or being made like him, he speaks of, as the greatest joy and happiness, they could aspire after. Nor is there any inconsistency, in considering perfect holiness, or deliverance from all sin, to be held up as a reward, and an animating encouragement, to those who love holiness, and really desire to increase in it, for its own sake. We are authorized so to consider it, by Christ himself. He has expressly promised it, as a reward, to those who are righteous—to those who hunger and thirst, or have any direct desire for it. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled:" that is, filled with righteousness, or made perfectly holy, according to their measure, and their desire. Nothing held up as a personal reward, would be considered as desirable, or as a happiness, by the real Christian, unless it were of a holy nature, and implied deliverance from sin : there can be no real, substantial happiness, only in proportion as there is conformity to God. Of this, every Christian is, in some measure, sensible, and with Paul, desires above all things, to be delivered from this body of death.

Again : The reward of the righteous will greatly consist in their being approved of a holy God. At the great decisive day, "God," saith the apostle, "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart : and then shall every man," that is, every one who is faithful, "have

praise of God." They will have the same testimony, which is given of Enoch in the context—a testimony, that they have pleased God. Well-done, good and faithful servant, will be their plaudit; and to those who love God, the divine approbation will of itself be an heaven.

Another thing, in which the reward or happiness of the saints will consist, will be their seeing the happiness of others, seeing all holy beings completely happy in heaven. In this life, so far as saints are influenced by a gospel temper, they are ever desiring, seeking, and rejoicing in the happiness of others: they rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. The good of others is their good. And herein the righteous are, in part, rewarded in this life; for in the exercise of benevolence, there is a sublime happiness. Those who possess it, always have matter for praise. Christ saith, "There is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or lands, &c. for my sake and the gospel, but he shall receive an hundred fold *now in this time*, houses, brethren, lands, &c. in the world to come, *eternal life*." That is, whosoever, from a selfish, contracted temper, becomes of a benevolent, gospel temper, shall find himself rewarded, by the enjoyment of an hundred fold more happiness in this life. And this he hath promised also, that the meek shall inherit, or be rewarded with the earth. They do not actually possess the earth, or the property of all their neighbors; but they enjoy it. To see others enjoy grace, adds to their happiness. How desirable an object then must it be, and how greatly must it add to their joy and happiness, to see all the friends of God, all holy beings, assembled in heaven, united in one society, and each one enjoying a happiness, which will increase without bounds, and continue without end? This will be a part of that heaven, with which the saints will be rewarded.

Another thing implied in the reward of the saints, and in which it will principally consist, is their being

permitted to join the heavenly hosts, in offering up divine worship and adoration, in singing praise to God and the Lamb, and spending an eternity, in exploring the wonders of redeeming love, and studying the word and works of God, in which new and pleasing wonders will continually and for ever open to view. Christians, even here in this state, consider it an unspeakable privilege and happiness, that they may worship and praise God in the congregation of saints; and it is their burden and sorrow that they can worship him with no more fervor and purity; that their services are polluted with such coldness and imperfection; and they often *cast an eye*, as it were, to the church of the first born in Zion above, and consider it as no small part of the reward, to which they have respect, that they shall ere long be permitted to join their number, and be enabled to love, praise, and worship God with them in perfection for ever.

In a word, the happiness of heaven, the fulness of the reward which is reserved for the saints, and to which they have respect, is to enjoy a holy God, and be permitted for ever to rejoice in his holy kingdom. This must render a creature perfectly happy; and it is the supreme desire of God's children. Their language is,

“ Were I in heaven without my God,  
    ’T would be no joy to me,  
And whilst this earth is my abode,  
    I long for none but thee.”

This is what God gives in the covenant of grace. He engages to the believer, to give himself; which is to give all possible good. The saints enjoy God in part, by the manifestations he gives in his word, and by his spirit, even in this life. They have the earnest of the inheritance, the substance of things hoped for; but it is at the end of the race, that they are to receive the prize, the full recompense of reward. Then it is, that the crown of glory will be bestowed,

and they enter upon that state of indescribable and inconceivable bliss, which will consist in knowing, loving, and enjoying God for ever.

A few of the most comprehensive things implied in the happiness, the heaven, with which the saints will be rewarded, have been mentioned. Many other things might be added ; as deliverance from pain, sickness, sorrow, and all natural evil, though these are not so directly desired, or respected by the Christian. The principal thing in the reward, and more immediate object of desire, is to see, know, and enjoy God, and the blessedness of his holy kingdom, which implies, however, deliverance from all evils. The

III. Thing proposed, is to shew what is implied in having respect to this reward.

It is said of Moses, that he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, having respect unto the recompense of the reward. Much is implied in having respect to this reward, as Moses had, so as to be influenced by it.

1. It implies a knowledge of it ; a full belief, or persuasion, that there is a reward for the righteous ; that God not only is, but that he is a rewarder of those, who diligently seek him.

2. It implies that the nature of the reward is seen and loved. Unless we have some true knowledge of the nature of the reward, or prize held up before us, how shall we love, or approve of it ? And if we have no love for it—if it appear unpleasant and undesirable in its nature, how shall it operate as a motive to diligence and exertion ? It implies therefore, a disposition to rejoice in the glory of God, and the happiness of his holy kingdom.

3. To have respect to the recompense of reward, reserved for the saints, so as to be influenced by it, to

holy activity, implies, not only a knowledge and love of it, but that our love and desire of it are great—that we place it highest in our estimation, and make other things subservient to it. Thus it was, that Moses had respect to the recompense of reward.—He saw and believed, that there is a reward for the righteous, a holy reward, a heavenly inheritance, which consists in the beatific vision and enjoyment of God. To this, he had respect. In view of this, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. In view of this, he chose the reproach of Christ, in preference to the treasures of Egypt, and went out, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. Thus it was with all the godly patriarchs of old. They looked to the things, which are unseen and eternal, placed their affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. They saw the promises, respecting the reward of the righteous, afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and were supported by them, under the most trying scenes, and animated in “the work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope.”

Having briefly shown the certainty, and the nature of the reward of the righteous, and some things implied in having respect to it : we proceed,

IV. To show, that the reward bestowed, implies nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of grace.—Though the righteous will be rewarded, and are assured in the word of God, that their reward in heaven will be in proportion to their diligence and holy activity here, yet, to prevent misapprehension, it is necessary to remark, that it will be a gracious reward. If God's rewarding the righteous, implied the notion of personal merit, or desert, it would be inconsistent with the doctrine of grace. Were Christians, were the saints now in heaven, to be treated



according to their personal character, according to strict distributive justice, without being viewed in their relation to Christ, they would be immediately thrust down to hell. When we hold up, or when the scriptures hold up, a reward for the righteous, no idea of personal merit is included. All is of grace, because every holy exercise of the righteous is the gift of God. And though in proportion as these holy exercises increase here, and lead to diligence and activity, their crown will be brightened, and their happiness increased in heaven, yet this is not on account of these holy personal exercises, as the meritorious ground ; but solely out of respect to an imputed righteousness.

1. The reward of the righteous is a reward of grace, because the very works, or holy exercises, which it pleaseth God to honor, are the effect of his operation. He rewards the works, of which he is the author, by the influence of his Holy Spirit. According to Isaiah xxvi. 12. "He who ordains peace for us, hath also wrought all our works in us."

2. The reward, which God bestows upon any of our fallen race, is solely out of respect to the atonement and mediation of Christ. Through the intimate and wonderful union between Christ and believers, they are not only accepted in him, but what they do is accepted and rewarded for his sake. We offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, only by Jesus Christ. There is no blessing so great, but for Christ's sake, God will bestow it. Neither is there any service so small, in those who are united to Christ, but for his sake, he will reward it. A cup of cold water, given to a disciple for Christ's sake, will ensure a disciple's reward. Thus the reward of the saints is, in every sense, a reward of grace. Their works are wrought in them by the Spirit of God ; and the blessings connected with them, are solely out



of respect to the merits of Christ, and to his offering, as we are said to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.

Again ; God's graciously connecting blessings with the obedience and fidelity of his people, serves to show, not only his love to Christ and them, but his regard to righteousness. His love to us, for Christ's sake, induces him to bless us ; but his love to righteousness, induces him to bless us in this particular way ; a way which, at the same time that it displays free grace, shall encourage holy activity. This may be illustrated by an example. An affectionate parent designs to confer a number of favors upon his child, and when he has arrived at mature age, to give him a large estate. He wishes also, to leave the mind of his child so prepared, by habits of industry and duty, that he may properly prize and enjoy the blessing. Therefore, in the course of his education, he holds up his favors, as rewards, or encouragements, to filial duty ; and declares, that his patrimony shall be enlarged, and his favors increased, according to his diligence and activity in the discharge of all filial duty. Now it is evident, that the father, in such a case, does not consider such great favors as properly the child's due, upon the footing of equity. He may require his obedience, without offering any peculiar favor or reward. But being disposed to give, his wisdom disposes him to give in such a manner, as shall encourage diligence and filial duty. It is somewhat in this sense, that God rewards his children, that finding is connected with seeking, justification, with believing, and crowns of glory, with overcoming. It is thus, as well as by the atonement of Christ, that " grace reigns in a way of righteousness, unto eternal life." The righteous, while they look at the recompense of reward, are fully convinced, that it will be all of free grace, that boasting is excluded, and that they have no room for glorying, but in the Lord. Of this they will be still more convinced,

at the great day of righteous retribution. Then also, the cavils of ungodly sinners will be silenced, the moral government of God honored, and his justice and grace both displayed, while the Judge declares before the assembled universe, concerning the saints, "These shall walk with me in white for they are worthy."

We shall close with a few inferences and reflections.

1. How useful, important, and necessary is a true, genuine faith in Christ? Without that faith, which implies a persuasion that God *is*, and that he *is*, through Christ, the gracious *rewarder* of those that seek him, it is impossible for us to please him. It is faith which looks forward to the blessed recompense of reward, and in view of it, enables us to choose afflictions and trials, when appointed by our heavenly Father, rather than all the riches and treasures of this transitory world.

2. We learn, that to have respect to the recompense of reward, is perfectly consistent with that disinterested, or holy love, which is implied in true faith, and is the essence of all true, acceptable obedience. Some have supposed, that to be excited to activity in duty, from a view of proposed rewards, implies such a selfishness, as is inconsistent with real religion. But from what has been said upon the nature of the reward held up to the righteous, we see it is otherwise. We have shown that it consists in being made holy, and permitted to join the heavenly host of saints and angels, in praising and serving God. In a word, that it consists in seeing, loving, and enjoying a holy God. But surely to have respect to this—to be delighted and animated in the prospect of such a reward, implies true religion, or love to God for his own loveliness. But not to have respect to it—not to be delighted in the prospect of being permitted to see the good of others, and the glory

of God advanced—not to be influenced and engaged by such a prospect, implies criminal indifference to the character of God, and the general good, and such an unholy, corrupt taste, as is inconsistent with true religion. Considering, therefore, the nature of the reward, we see that it is such, as is impossible to please and influence men, any further than they are possessed of holy love, or conformity to God. Hence,

3. We infer, that none but true Christians, or saints, have any real respect to the recompense of reward. They may have a respect, in all their exertions and strivings, to deliverance from future punishment, or natural evil ; but, as to the real reward of the righteous, the positive happiness of heaven, that which the righteous have their eye directly upon, a happiness which consists in seeing others happy, in seeing and enjoying God, and spending an eternity in praising him ; to such a reward, they have no real, or direct respect. It has no influence upon them. We have shown, that to be influenced to exertion, in view of the reward, as Moses was, implies a full belief and persuasion, that there is a reward for the righteous, and that the nature of it is seen and loved. But where true faith is wanting, both these are wanting. None see, love, and desire the reward of the righteous, unless they have faith—unless they are the children of God ; for it is a holy reward : and if it were possible to be bestowed upon a sinner, while such, it would give him no happiness. The righteous are induced to give up houses, lands, &c. for the reward, which they shall receive in this life, which is an hundred fold. But how are they to receive it ? Truly, by having a temper of mind, which delights in the happiness of others. But this is no motive to sinners, or those who are wholly selfish ; nor will it have any influence upon them, to give up their selfish pursuits. Thus it is with the reward of the righteous, in the future world. None are pleased

with it—none have respect to it, and are ready to give up all for it, but those who prefer the glory of God, and the general good, to private, selfish interests.

Some, in examining themselves, have entertained doubts, fearing they had too much respect to the recompense of reward, and that therefore, their religion was selfish. They indeed, may have respect to deliverance from future punishment, considered as natural evil ; but if this be all, their religion is indeed selfish. But let them look to the real nature of the reward of the righteous, the enjoyment of a holy God, and serving and praising him for ever. Let them examine, whether those things are really desirable, and do influence them to diligence and holy activity as they did Moses ; for in this sense, they cannot have too great respect to the recompense of reward. To be uninfluenced by it, is inconsistent with Christianity.

Finally. Let Christians be animated to diligence and holy activity, in view of the glorious reward of the saints ; and be ever ready to suffer affliction, or persecution, in the cause of Christ. “ Fear none of those things,” saith Christ, “ which thou shalt suffer ; but be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Remember that the greater are your exertions for Christ, the brighter will be your crown. What though you have crosses and afflictions ? The light affliction is but for a moment, and worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while you look, or have respect, not to the things which are seen and temporal ; but to the things which are unseen and eternal. For the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. The righteous shall be made perfectly holy—they shall have the approbation of their Judge—they shall see the Redeemer as he is, and be made like him.

They shall be happy in the happiness of all holy beings, and in the glory of God.

In view of these things, Moses, Abraham, all the patriarchs and prophets, were influenced to the noblest exertions in the cause of God, rising in their views above this present evil world. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses and examples, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which most easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race set before us—looking to the recompense of reward, even Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith ; who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Then when he shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory—receive the glorious recompense of reward, that of seeing him as he is, being made like him, enjoying him, and rejoicing in his blessedness, and the blessedness of all holy beings for ever.

---

## S E R M O N IX.

### THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

---

#### REVELATION I. 5.

— *Unto HIM that loved us, and washed us from  
our sins in his own blood.*

HOW great, how mysterious, is the love of God to men, displayed in the work of redemption! It is celebrated by the heavenly hosts, with unceasing songs of wonder and joy. Angels, though not the immediate subjects of it, desire to look into it, as the most glorious display of the divine perfections. It is celebrated by glorified saints, more understandingly and feelingly, than by the angels. These sing a new song—a song which none can learn, but those who are redeemed from the earth. “And they sang a new song, saying thou art worthy to take the Book; and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood.” Such is the employment of the church triumphant in the heavenly world:—and shall not the church militant join the choir, and even on earth anticipate the songs of the New Jerusalem? Yes. All the chosen and called—every true Christian, whatever may be his difficul-



ties and temptations in the world, is ready to bear a humble part, in meditating upon the wonders of redeeming love, and offering up devout ascriptions of praise, to "Him who loved them."

Whenever the love of the Father and of the Son in the work of redemption, is mentioned in the sacred scriptures, it is represented as being great and glorious, and even passing knowledge. "God so loved the world," said the inspired evangelist, "that He gave his only begotten Son. In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, in that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might have life through Him.—Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son, to be a propitiation for our sins. Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us." It is frequently repeated, that Christ hath loved the church, and given himself for it; and so eminent and signal is this love, that it is considered as his character and name. As in Rom. viii. 37. "Through Him that *loved* us;"—and in the text, "to Him that *loved* us,"—to *Him*: It is not said, who he is. There is no antecedent to the pronoun, *him*; and no proper name is applied to him. Yet no Christian can be at a loss respecting the person intended. What is said is a sufficient description of him—"he that *loved* us."—LOVE is his name, and LOVE will for ever be his memorial in the church.

Upon this occasion, when we are about to celebrate, in these memorials, his death, it may be proper and profitable to turn our thoughts, for a moment, to the nature and degree of this love—the manner in which it was manifested; and the returns which we are obligated to make unto Him that has so loved us.

#### I. Of the nature and degree of the love of Christ.

With respect to the nature of it—*it is free*—it is disinterested. The love which mankind naturally

exercise, is wholly selfish ; and great degrees of selfishness remain in the most benevolent men. We are disposed to do good to those, who can return the favor, more readily than to those, from whom no advantage is expected. We naturally love those who love us. This is only a particular modification of self-love. But the love of Christ was not excited in any such way. We had not done any thing to oblige him, nor was there any thing in us to move Him, but our wretchedness. "Herein," says the apostle "is *love* ; not that we loved God, but that He loved us." The disinterestedness of the Saviour's love appears further in this, that we were not only destitute of love to Him, but were his enemies.—"For," says the apostle, "when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the *ungodly*." Again, "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And farther, "For if while we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, &c."—Such is the nature of the Saviour's love, perfectly disinterested, according to the representation of scripture, which is the only criterion of judging upon this subject.

Again, how GREAT, as well as free, is the love of Christ ? There is nothing to compare with it. The highest degree, to which the love of man ever rose, was for one friend to lay down his life for another. "Greater love," says Christ, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." But the God-man, has greater love—He has laid down his life for his enemies.

The apostle intimates, that the love of Christ exceeds all thought and comprehension. "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height ; and to *know* the love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge*. It is above our understanding. We cannot find it out to perfection. We know not the full dignity of his

person, nor the greatness of his condescension, and therefore cannot measure his love. But, though it cannot be measured, nor comprehended, yet every real Christian, every one who is a partaker of the love and Spirit of Christ, delights to study, and to search into it, and to know more and more of it. The saints know something of it, and desire to know more. And in proportion to their knowledge, is the strength of their desire. With the holy angels, they earnestly desire to look into these things. Their knowledge of them will constantly increase, and yet never come to an end.

But the nature and the greatness of the love of Christ, will still further appear, while we proceed,

II. To mention briefly the manner and means by which it was manifested.

1. How readily did he undertake for sinners in the covenant of redemption. The wisdom of God, as law-giver and governor, insisted on an atonement for sin, in order to the salvation of sinners, that He might be just in justifying the ungodly. This was to be done, only by the Son, taking our nature and dying a victim. To this he cheerfully consented. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—then said I, lo I come." Nor was he less forward to perform than to undertake for sinners. In the fulness of time, he came into our world. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Though in the form of God, and equal with the eternal Father, yet he took on him the likeness of sinful flesh, appeared in the form of a servant, and submitted to pain, poverty, and contempt. What gracious condescension was, this in the great Lord of heaven and earth! "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," says the apostle, "that though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor." Yes, my

friends, we know something of his grace—we know that it is great grace—but the extent of its greatness we cannot comprehend. Again,

His love was manifested in the condition and manner of life, to which he submitted. In the early part of his life, he submitted to a hard and laborious employment. When he entered upon public life, he still appeared in circumstances of abasement, and subsisted by charity. “The Son of Man,” saith he, “hath not where to lay his head.” He was also vilified and traduced as a deceiver, as a blasphemer, and confederate with devils. Thus he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself—of sinners for whom he had the kindest designs, and was preparing the greatest of blessings.

But the greatest, and the summary expression of his love, was his death upon the cross. Here the scriptures lay the greatest, and frequently the whole stress of his sufferings. “To him that loved us, and *washed us in his own blood.*” Merely to have lived in our world, and consorted with sinners, without the sufferings he underwent, would have been great condescension. But that he should take a body, and come into the world, on purpose to suffer, agonize, and die—that he should become a man, on purpose that he might be a man of sorrows, and save sinners from endless woe, is an expression of love beyond comprehension.

But the expressions of his love did not terminate at his death. As he had prayed for his church, for all those who should believe on him, and promised to support them, against the gates of hell; so he has continued to intercede for them before the throne, and has been faithful to his promises, by making all things, in his providential government, subservient to their good. To all who receive him, he manifests a peculiar love, and will love them to the end. None shall pluck them out of his hand. He sends the comforter, the Holy Spirit, who is the purchase of

his sufferings, to guide, restore, support, quicken, and comfort them. He knows and pities their infirmities, and sympathizes with them in their trials and conflicts. He often brings them to his banqueting house, where his banner over them is love. He gathers them in his arms, and carries them in his bosom ; and never leaves, nor forsakes them, till they are prepared to be where he is, and see his glory.

Finally, the love of Christ is manifested, by the preparation he makes in the heavenly world, for those who believe in his name, and “ follow him in the regeneration.” Then will his followers understand the greatness of his love, when they see it expressed in its final issue. What that will be, we cannot now strictly determine ; for though Christians, in this world, do have some prelibation—though they have the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, yet eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, to determine the happiness, God hath prepared for them that love him. “ Christ loved the church,” says the apostle, “ and gave himself for it ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” For this end he left the realms of bliss—and for this end he has entered heaven, as the forerunner. He has gone to prepare a place for them, and has promised that he “ will come again, and receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also.”—I proceed in the

III. And last place, to mention the returns, we are obligated to make to him who hath so loved us. Not that any adequate compensation can be given for a Saviour’s love ; for what have we which we did not receive ? Nor is any thing required but a return of love—a delight in his character, and in the character of his children. This is reasonable and fit in the nature of things. It is reasonable and fit that we



should love Christ primarily for his inherent excellency—for his being benevolent—a friend to God and his law ; and as evidences of this his infinitely holy and benevolent character, it is reasonable and fit, that we should love him for what he has done and suffered for us and the human race ; that is, we ought to love him with a love of complacence, and a love of gratitude. Our love ought to be active, and expressed in all proper ways.

1. We ought to express it, as in the text, by offering up devout ascriptions of praise. “Unto Him, that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood—to Him, be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” Again, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” Of these and every ascription of praise, the Lamb of God is infinitely worthy. All who love him, will rejoice to see him thus praised, and will account it their highest privilege, to be permitted to join with his followers in presenting his praises.

2. We ought to manifest our love to Christ, still further than by words. It ought to appear in a steady, active zeal for his name and honor, and devotedness to his cause. When the Saviour said to Peter, “lovest thou me?” he directed him as a proof and manifestation of his love, *to feed his sheep, and feed his lambs*. A profession of love to Christ, without sincere and actual exertions in his cause, is mere hypocrisy. Let us all, therefore, if we have any regard to the Saviour, manifest it, by studying to advance his kingdom, and promote, in the best manner, the great design for which he came into the world, viz. the glory of God, in the salvation of sinners. Surely it is our most reasonable and incumbent duty, to live wholly to him that loved us. We ought to make it our meat and drink to do his will—to em-



ploy all our time and talents, all we have and are, in subserviency to his interest and glory.

Another very important and acceptable way for us to express our love to Christ, is by loving, assisting, and relieving his members, as far as we have capacity, or opportunity. Surely, if we love him, these who bear his image will be especially dear to us. How strongly has the Saviour manifested his approbation of acts of kindness and love to his followers, and declared that he will consider them as expressions of love to himself, in the representation he has given of the day of judgment? Matt. xxv. 34. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat—I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink—I was a stranger, and ye took me in—naked, and ye clothed me—I was sick, and ye visited me—I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And when the righteous shall, in their humility inquire, when they manifested such love to him; he will answer, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

So great stress is laid by the apostle John, upon our exercising love and kindness to the poor members of Christ, that he makes it the turning point of assurance. "We know," says he "we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren—He that loveth not his brother abideth in death—Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren—Who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Again, We ought to manifest our love to Christ, by obeying all his commands. It ought to flow forth in an uniform obedience. This, he himself hath established, as a test of its being genuine. "If ye

love me, keep my commandments—He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” And again, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” Had we the tongues of angels, and an understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge; and should we profess the greatest degree of affection and love to the Saviour, and even give our bodies to be burned, for the brethren, it would be nothing and vanity, without a cordial subjection of heart to his authority, and a life governed by his precepts.

Finally, As obedience to his commands in general is a proper and necessary expression of love to the Saviour, so especially is an obedience to his last command, his dying charge, to celebrate his love, in the memorials he then instituted. Are not the great things he has done for sinners, and to magnify the law of God, worthy to be remembered with the liveliest gratitude? But can any be said, gratefully to remember him, who constantly neglect the memorials of his love, which he instituted for the express purpose of maintaining his remembrance? Not but that there may be many who love him, who have not as yet owned him in his ordinance; but such, surely, cannot be at ease in their neglect. Let such be exhorted to reflect on his love, and his affectionate command, “This do in remembrance of me.”

Let the professing people of God now do it, in remembrance of Him. May you, my brethren, be hereby enabled to perceive the love of God—be quickened in your love towards him and his members, and excited to go forth and manifest it, in a life of self-denial, and uniform obedience to his commands.

How gracious and kind was the Saviour, in instituting this memorial. It manifested the greatest concern and regard for us. He knew our weakness. He knew how strong our attachments would be to

the things which are seen and temporal—how prone we should be to forget his love, and crucify him afresh by our sins. The institution of the sacrament of the supper, he has calculated to guard us in these respects. It is calculated to teach us our weakness ; to teach us our dependence, and the necessity of feeding on him by faith ; to teach us the greatness of his sufferings ; the evil of sin ; the holiness of God's law, and the end of his death. In a word, the whole history of redemption is so concentrated into one point, and brought to our view, in this memorial of his love, that it cannot but draw forth the love, gratitude, and obedience of all, who have not hearts of stone.

Let us, my brethren, on this occasion, strive for lively exercises of humility, of gratitude and love. Let us in the memorial of a suffering Saviour, contemplate his benevolence, the excellencies of his character, and his mediatorial qualifications. He was made perfect through sufferings. In Him, all fulness dwells. He is made, of God, unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; that he who glorieth, should glory in the Lord. Let us view him as Immanuel, as speaking from the bosom of the Father, and as speaking as never man spake. Let us view him, in the several steps of his humiliation and triumph, in all the acts of his power, faithfulness, and grace, till our souls flow forth in holy resolutions, through divine grace, of renewed obedience and exertions in his cause. By attending on means and ordinances, in this veil of flesh, may we be prepared to see him in his glory, without a veil—love him without coldness—enter into the joys prepared for those that love him, and join in the ascriptions of the church triumphant,—“ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” Amen.

---

## S E R M O N X.

THE CHURCH BEAUTIFUL AND FORMIDABLE.

---

### SONG OF SOLOMON VI. 10.

*Who is she, that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners ?*

**T**HIS inspired poem was written by Solomon, the king of Israel. It is a sacred allegory ; and is written, like many other parts of the sacred scriptures, in a dramatic form. The principal characters exhibited are the bridegroom and the bride. These are represented as conversing together, or as speaking respecting each other. The excellencies of each, and their affection for each other, form the principal subject of the poem.

The bridegroom metaphorically represents Christ ; and by his affection for the bride, is represented Christ's love to the church. The bride, of consequence, metaphorically represents the church. She is called the bride, the lamb's wife. Rev. xxi. 3. Her affection for the bridegroom represents the love of the church to Christ. The bride rejoices to hear the bridegroom's voice ; and so does the church to hear Christ's voice. This is the Saviour's testimony —“ He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom ; but

the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth, and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice." John iii. 29. Her admiration of the bridegroom, and disposition to extol him, metaphorically represent the church, admiring Christ, and setting forth his divine excellencies. Every thing in this book is expressed figuratively ; making of the whole a sacred allegory : containing many important truths, for the satisfaction and comfort of those, who with an humble, sanctified mind apply themselves to the careful perusal of it.

It is by no means to be understood *carnally*, (as some, unfriendly to the sacred scriptures, have pretended) or *literally*, concerning Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, and their marriage. It may be understood as *alluding* to it in some respects ; and to the general custom or manner of celebrating the nuptials of persons in those eastern countries, at that period ; but it is to be understood spiritually, concerning Christ and the church, or all true believers. This might be made evident from many considerations. It will be sufficient to suggest two or three.

1. Many of the descriptions of the bridegroom and bride in this book are such as could not, with any propriety, be applied to Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter ; as where he is introduced as a shepherd, and called his bride's brother, Chap. v. and where he gives such high and extraordinary commendations of himself, as are frequent in this book ; and as where the bride is the keeper of the vineyards, and of sheep, and is said to be smitten and abused by the watchmen, and to be terrible as an army, and to be like a company of Pharaoh's horses. There are also many other expressions and descriptions, which if applied literally to a bridegroom and bride, would be absurd and monstrous ; but understood allegorically, and applied to Christ and the church, may ex-



press interesting truths ; they are doubtless therefore to be so understood and applied.

2. This will appear further evident from the consideration, that the idea of the Messiah's being the head, husband, and saviour of God's people, was familiar to the prophets, and the wise and pious Israelites, in the time of the Old Testament. God compares himself to a bridegroom, and his church to a bride. Isa. lxii. He calls and owns himself the husband of his people. Isa. liv. and Hosea ii. In these places, it appears by comparing them with other scriptures, that the terms God, or the Lord, are intended to point out Christ, or the second person in the Godhead ; who was to come, and since has come into the world, for the consummation of the union between God and his people, which has been eternally designed. In the New Testament, Christ is expressly declared, and with particular allusion to the language of the Old Testament, to be the bridegroom, or husband of his church. The 45th Psalm, which is admitted by all interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, to refer to Christ, and the mystical union between him and the church, and to be incapable of any other consistent meaning, is but a kind of abridgment of this Song of Solomon. In both there is an allusion to the marriage of Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter. But the great object, in both cases, is to celebrate the union between Christ and his church.

From these considerations, though many others might be suggested, I think it is sufficiently manifest, that the great scope and business of this book is to describe the mutual love, union, and communion, which subsist between Christ and the church, in the various conditions to which it is liable in this world ; such as a state of weakness, desertion, and persecution, from foolish and wicked shepherds, or pastors and the like.



I would just add here, for the confirmation of these ideas, and for further explanation, that it is to be considered, that the sacred writer often varies his speech. Sometimes he speaks of the church in general, as one person, or body ; and sometimes of the particular members of it, or of individual believers, both such as are sincere, and such as are not. This occasions the difference of characters exhibited, as the mother and spouse—the children, or daughters of Jerusalem—those who are strangers to the bridegroom, and those who are well acquainted with him.

Having premised these things, in support of the figurative meaning of this book, and in explanation of the allegory which it contains ; I come now, more particularly, to consider the words of our text. “ Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners ? ”

The text begins with the question, Who is she ? The person respected is evidently the church. The question does not imply an uncertainty as to this ; but seems designed merely to express admiration, and commendation. Who ? (i. e.) what manner of person is this ? How excellent and glorious ! Therefore, to describe her beauty, excellency, and glory, she is compared to the morning—to the moon—to the sun—and to an army in battle array. The design of the present discourse is,

I. Briefly to illustrate these comparisons. And,

II. To point out what that is, which renders the church so beautiful and glorious, and so terrible to her enemies.

I. I am to illustrate the several comparisons in the text.

Respecting these I would premise, that they are to be understood as a true description of the church, so far, and no farther, than she acts in character, and is conformed to the word of God. 1st. The Church is compared to the morning. "Who is she, that looketh forth as the morning?" We have here a striking and beautiful comparison. The morning rises out of darkness; or it succeeds a night of darkness. It rises in the east, and looks forth, or spreads to the west. In like manner, the church rises up out of a dark world; a world darkened by sin, by ignorance and blindness of heart. It rises up, and looks forth, or spreads like the beams of the morning; and it will continue to spread, till it extends to the ends of the earth. As it progresses, the darkness recedes—the darkness of ignorance, infidelity, and false religion. When the day breaks, the morning rises, and the shadows flee away.

The morning also makes a visible appearance. It comes forth to the view of beholders. So does the church of Christ. It makes a visible appearance. It stands in the full view of the world, and is conspicuous to all. It is compared to a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid.

The morning frequently appears mild and serene; and thus it is also with the church, when under divine influence. In the description given by the wise man, she is beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem. When Christ is present, the church, and all its members are calm and serene, resigned to the divine will, and rejoicing in the smiles of God.

2. The church is further described by being compared to the moon, "Fair as the moon," viz. when she is full, and walking in her brightness, as it is expressed, Job xxxi. 26.

In several respects the comparison is very striking.

The moon in itself is a dark body ; and could afford no light, were it not for the sun. The church also in herself, is dark, ignorant, and guilty. She receives all her graces and beauty, from the fountain of light and life.

The light which comes to us from the moon, when compared to the light of the sun, though the same in kind, is dim ; so the light which is in the church, and is exhibited by the members of it, is the same in kind, though not in degree, with that which is in the sun of righteousness.

The moon often changes, and shines not with full light ; and is sometimes eclipsed, by the intervention of the earth ; so the church, in this imperfect state, is variable as to her shining. Sin often eclipses her beauty, and clouds her fairest appearance. This resemblance, however, seems not to be particularly respected in the text. The chief point of resemblance, which is there expressed, is that of beauty “ fair as the moon.”

There is indeed in the moon something very beautiful and majestic, when it rises in a fair evening sky. With silent eloquence it speaks the praise of God, and declares in sensible accents, his wisdom, power, and goodness. So also does the church, when acting in character, appear fair and beautiful. She speaks the praises of her God and Redeemer ; and clearly exhibits his power and wisdom—his infinitely free mercy, and sovereign, boundless grace. Well may the church therefore be said to be “ fair as the moon.”

3. The church, in the words of the text, is compared to the sun ; and in many respects there is a great resemblance.

The sun strikingly displays divine perfections ; so also does the church, when she adorns the doctrine of God her Saviour, according to his commandment.

The sun is, in its influences, friendly to the inhabitants of this world. Its rays are cheering to man and beast. It scatters clouds and vapors; and by its invigorating and genial heat, nourishes the fruits of the earth, and brings them to perfection. Most benign also is the influence of the church of Christ, upon the moral world, and upon all the interests of society. The people of God, in conformity with his word, extend their friendship and kind offices to all around. Their study is, to do good, and to communicate, and to advance the interest of liberty, science, and religion.

The sun, when he rises, kindly invites the laborer to the field; and calls on the traveller to pursue his journey. The church also, bending her course through this vale of tears, towards another and a better country, even an heavenly, calls on a stupid stumbling world, saying, "Come ye with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

But the point of resemblance specially respected in the text, is that of *clearness* and *brightness*—*clear as the sun*, i. e. without any such dark spots, as are in the moon. This is to be understood of the church, in the same sense, as when she is said by the apostle, to be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Such is her state now, by God's gracious acceptance of her in Christ, through his righteousness. Such she is also now, in some good degree, by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit; and will be in perfection in the world to come.

4. The bride or church is further said in the text, to be "terrible as an army with banners."

The church militant is here compared to an army, or body of men, equipped and prepared for war. She is represented, not only as making a beautiful and glorious, but very *formidable* appearance. She is indeed furnished with weapons for her spiritual war-

fare. As an army is furnished with weapons for its defence, and for the annoyance and destruction of its enemies ; so the church is furnished with weapons, which are mighty, through Christ, to the destroying of the works of darkness, and defeating the designs of the adversary.—“ The weapons of our warfare,” said the apostle “ are not carnal ; but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.”

As an army has a commander or general by whom it is led on to battle ; so the church has a head and leader—She carries on the spiritual warfare, under the direction and influence of Christ, the great leader and captain of salvation, by whose assistance she is sure of success.

Once more, as an army has its banner, or standard ; so also hath the church its banner. This is the *word of God*. The followers of Christ lift up this, as their ensign and defence. They rally around it, and are safe ; for the truth is mighty, and will prevail, notwithstanding all the opposition with which it meets. While it encourages and strengthens the friends of Christ, it strikes a dread, and sends trembling into the hearts of their enemies.

Thus we have considered the comparisons in the text. We may now remark, that the design of them is, to exhibit various and different excellencies in the church. When taken together, they describe her as having the mildness and beauty of the morning, when it looketh forth, and scatters the shades—the fairness and majesty of the moon, when walking in brightness—the clearness and splendor of the sun, when shining in his strength—and the terror of an army, when set in battle-array.

II. We are to enquire and shew what that is, which renders the church so beautiful and glorious ; and so terrible to its enemies.

1. What is it, that renders the church beautiful and glorious ?



To this I reply, it is not splendid edifices for public worship—nor pompous rites and ceremonies invented by men—nor great worldly riches—nor multitudes of members. Had any, or all these been sufficient to give beauty and glory to a church, the church of Rome had been beautiful and glorious, amidst all its corruptions.

But we may observe affirmatively, that the church appears beautiful and glorious, when she expresses the true spirit and temper of Christ. When all the members have the same mind in them, which was also in him. When they express their love to God and men, by a careful observance of the divine commands, and a tender regard to the cause of truth. When they appear humble, peaceable, meek, and benevolent. When they unitedly and earnestly seek the glory of God—rejoice in his government—delight in his law, and in the doctrines of the gospel. When they keep close to the pure and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity; and in a spirit of love and unity, maintain the discipline of Christ's house. "Behold," says the psalmist, "how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment. As the dew of Hermon, and as the cloud that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever more."

When the church feels this divine influence, and is united in love, she appears beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem. She looketh forth with the mildness and beauty of the morning, fair as the moon, and clear as the sun.

2. What is that which renders the church not only beautiful and glorious, but formidable to her enemies—even terrible, as an army with banners? To this I reply,

M



*First.* It is the strict discipline which she maintains. The comparison is to an army with banners—a body of men subject to perfect order and discipline, and moving as one man. With such discipline, an army is truly formidable ; while, without it, it is weak and despicable. The same is true also of a church, or any society, or body of men whatever.

*Secondly.* The church is formidable to opposition, by means of the weapons with which she is furnished. These are not carnal but spiritual. She presents to the view of enemies the armor of God—his word, which is the sword of the spirit ; and with which is connected the breastplate of righteousness, and also the helmet of salvation. With these she is formidable to her enemies. Nothing alarms them more, than to behold the power of truth, in trembling and convinced sinners ; or to hear the songs of those rejoicing converts, in whose minds the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, hath been revealed. They are thereby made to tremble, because they know, that if such things be real, and necessary for entering into the kingdom of heaven, the ground of their own hopes is destroyed, as there is nothing, in their experience, of a similar nature. They must therefore feel the danger they are in, of meeting wrath in the world to come.

The truth in belief and practice is indeed mighty, and it will prevail.

In a word, that which renders the church formidable to opposition, is the same which renders it beautiful and glorious ; and it may all be summed up in love. This is a principle, which if possessed will effect strict discipline, and secure perfect unity.

Were love to God, to each other, and to mankind to prevail, and be acted out in a church, it would answer to every description given in our text. A church is then most beautiful and glorious, and at the same

time most like an army with banners, terrible to opposition, when the members are united in love, and all seeking the glory of God, and the good of each other, as their own.

Were Christians thus united in love, they would be in that state in which Christ prayed they might be, John xvii. 23. "That they may be one, even as we are one." And what would be the consequence? Truly the world would be convinced, that Christ is the Son of God, and that Christians are his people, beloved of the Father, even as Christ is loved; for it is added, "That the world may know, that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Here then we see what would convince and convert the world, or sinners around—viz. Christians being united in love. It is not the number of members, but it is their living in love, and acting out the true spirit of Christianity, which will make an impression on the world, and bring sinners to serious and anxious consideration, and to believe in Christ as the Son of God.

Though there may have been many eminent Christians in the world, and many branches of the church, where love has appeared, and been acted out, in somewhat of an high degree; yet there have been so many of a different description, and so much imperfection in the best, that the trial has never yet been fairly and fully made, how terrible a church would be, and how beautiful and glorious, if it answered, in some good degree, to the prayer of Christ—"That they may be one, even as we are one."

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what has been said we see, why the church is not more glorious and formidable at the pre-

sent day. It is owing to the want of that charity, which is the bond of perfectness and peace ; and to the consequent neglect of duty, by the members, to their Lord and Saviour, and to one another, particularly of the important duty of Christian discipline. Without strict attention to this duty, they cannot exist as a body compact together—they cannot, as they ought, be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, nor can they answer the description in the text, “ fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

2. From this subject we learn how we as a church ought to walk. It becomes us, as we would act in character, and answer to the description in the text, to adhere to the doctrines of Christianity, in profession and practice, and thus to manifest that the love of Christ constraineth us. This we have solemnly engaged to do. It becomes us then to devote ourselves to God, indeed and in truth. We ought to assemble ourselves for the worship of God in season, and out of the ordinary season. We ought to pray without ceasing, and with all manner of prayer. We ought not to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good, taking Christ for our pattern. But in these and in many other respects, alas ! my brethren, how far short of duty do we fall ?

Finally—How great the importance of being of the true church of Christ, or his sincere followers. Such are safe and happy—they are safe in his protection—they are happy in his love. He has placed his affection upon them. He has set them as a seal on his arm, and a seal in his heart. His love to them is stronger than death. Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it. What shall we say to these things ? Let the love of Christ constrain us. Let it constrain Christians. Let it constrain sinners

to come unto him, and receive him, and give him their hearts, and live no more unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. "Hearken O daughter ; and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty : for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Amen.



---

## SERMON XI.

GOD'S PEOPLE UNDER VOWS.

---

### PSALM CXIX. 106.

*I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep  
thy righteous judgments.*

**I**N the Psalms, particularly in this, and in the nineteenth Psalm, we find the inspired writer speaking much of the law, judgments, statutes, testimonies, and commandments of the Lord. All these, as used by the Psalmist, are generally to be understood, nearly in the same sense, as referring to the divine rules and precepts of the scripture, relative to the conduct of mankind, and God's dealings with them.

These, considered as the solemnly enacted regulations of God's kingdom, are called the statutes of the Lord. Considered as a witness between God and his creatures, of what God requires of men, and what he will do for them, upon the performance of the condition, they are called the testimonies of the Lord. When considered as the declaration of God's righteous will, by which men are required to govern themselves, and according to which they are to receive their final judicial sentence, they are called the judgments of the Lord.



A covenant and oath, therefore, to keep God's righteous judgments, are a covenant and oath to be the Lord's, to be devoted to his service, and to be governed by his word. These were the covenant and oath of the Psalmist, of which he speaks in the text. He had solemnly chosen the Lord for his portion, and the word of the Lord for his rule. In the 57th verse of the context, he says, "Thou art my portion O Lord, I have said that I would keep thy words." He had said this under the solemnity of an oath. The vows of God were upon him. Nor did he regret, that he had thus sworn to the Lord, nor hesitate to acknowledge the strictness, extent, and binding nature of his oath. He looked upon the choice, which he had made, and the dedication of himself, his time, his talents, and all that he possessed, to the service of God, with entire approbation. The only things, he had to regret and bewail, were his own great imperfections, and numerous shortcomings in duty. The judgments of the Lord were not grievous to him. He delighted in the word, the people, the house, and the ordinances of God; and he desired that his heart might be more and more enlarged, that he might run in the way of God's commandments. He was, therefore, ready and cheerful, with a sense of dependence, and in the strength of divine grace, to approve and renew his vows, as in the text: "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

These words suggest the following practical observations, for our application and improvement.

I. All the judgments, or commandments of God are righteous; and are thus viewed by his people.

II. God's people are under solemn covenant vows and obligations, to keep his commandments.

III. They repent not of their vows, nor desire to be released from them; but rather to renew them.

I. All the judgments, or commandments of God are righteous ; and are thus viewed by his people.

This observation naturally arises from the text, and is confirmed by numerous parallel passages, in which the people of God have expressed their feelings on this subject. That David, and the ancient saints, viewed God's statutes, judgments, and commandments as righteous, none will deny, who read and credit the scriptures. But, as in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. Thus do the views of the people of God, upon this subject, answer to each other, in every age of the world. Being changed into the same image, by the spirit of the Lord, they are agreed in this, as in all things essential, that the statutes and judgments of the Lord are righteous ; that his ways are equal ; and that all the injunctions and prohibitions of his word are just and reasonable. They consider it fit, and a righteous thing in God, to require perfect obedience of intelligent creatures, upon pain of endless wrath.

To give their hearts to God ; to devote themselves, and all that they have and are, to his service, as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, walking in all the commands of the Lord blameless, they consider as a most reasonable service. They are convinced that they have nothing, which they have not received ; and are sensible, that God may, in perfect righteousness, require any thing of them, and enjoin any thing upon them, which shall be for his glory, and the ultimate good of his kingdom.

By the wicked, indeed, the requirements and injunctions of God's word are not thus viewed. Although they recommend themselves to the consciences of all, and are acknowledged to be righteous by many, who, in practice, disregard them ; yet it is certain that all natural men do *practically*, and some of them, *expressly* say, that the commandments of the Lord are hard and unrighteous, and his ways unequal.

When they hear the threatenings of the law, and the doctrines and duties of the gospel inculcated, they exclaim, "These are hard sayings, who can hear them?" They account it hard, that God should require the heart, while he rejects, as abomination, all impenitent doings; that he should require sinners to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ; making the interest of his kingdom their ultimate aim in all things. They also consider the particular duties of the Christian life, as too numerous, and too strict; especially, that they should be required to attend the public worship of God, every Lord's day, and both parts of the day, and observe all gospel ordinances, living in the practice of secret prayer, and of daily family prayer, with the daily reading of the scriptures. These, and various other things, they consider unreasonable. There needs no other proof of this, than their own pleas and excuses for justifying themselves. If their excuses, for a general neglect of these and other duties, be reasonable, then the statutes and commandments of God, respecting them, are unreasonable.

But whatever may be the language or views of the children of this world, yet "Wisdom is justified of her children." To them, the words of her mouth are right words. All the people of God consider his ways and commandments, as reasonable and righteous, and they can cheerfully adopt the language of the Psalmist; "The statutes of the Lord are right: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether." "I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things, to be right."

II. God's people are under solemn covenant vows and obligations, to keep his commandments.

They not only consider them as righteous, and binding in themselves, but they have submitted to them, and laid themselves under a voluntary obligation, to obey them. They have sworn to the

Lord, that they will keep his righteous judgments. This David did ; and this does every real, and every professing Christian. This is done, virtually, by every Christian, when the soul first embraces the Saviour ; because there is then a virtual self-dedication, and an entire consecration of soul and body to be the Lord's, in the way of the new covenant. At this time also, God becomes engaged, by promise, to be to the soul a God and portion for ever.

But this is done most expressly, when persons come forward, and publicly profess religion, avouching the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be their God, and themselves to be his people ; engaging to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded them. Especially, is it done, when they attend upon the ordinances of the gospel, particularly, the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The original meaning of the word sacrament, is an oath.

Whenever, therefore, we attend upon the sacrament of Baptism, to dedicate ourselves, and our children to God, we do then, solemnly and renewedly, vow that we will be the Lord's. When we receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, partaking of the emblems of his body and blood, we not only profess to be united to Christ, in one body, and by one spirit, but to receive him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

The ancient custom of ratifying covenants, was by eating together. And when professing Christians partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and commune with Christ at his table, they solemnly perform an oath. They confirm and seal their covenant, to be the Lord's, and their engagements to keep his righteous judgments.

How solemn and interesting, therefore, is the situation of professing Christians ! They are not their own. They possess nothing, which they do not owe

to God not only as the author and giver, but as express- and voluntarily, consecrated to him. Their time, property, influence, and all their talents, are publicly devoted and consecrated to God, to be improved in his cause, and according to his direction. They are bound, by a solemn oath and covenant, to make religion the great business of their lives ; to be no longer conformed to this world, or its sinful customs, maxims and practices ; but to be crucified to the world ; to mortify their members, which are upon the earth ; to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth ; and to lead a life of prayer, humility, self-denial, and uniform, persevering, and strict obedience, to the commandments and ordinances of God.

A sad state, perhaps some of you may say, an unhappy, uncomfortable course of life, from which you hope to be free for ever. But is this the language of the real people of God ? Do they regret their choice ? Are they weary of the service of God, and desirous of being released from it ? By no means. For,

III. They repent not of their vows, nor desire to be released from them ; but rather to renew them. \*

“ I have sworn,” says the Psalmist, “ and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.”

The true people of God are not weary of his service. They are willing to be under obligations and solemn vows, to keep God’s righteous judgments. It may often be the case, and doubtless is, at present, that many professing Christians grow weary of the ways of God. The sabbath, ordinances, reading of the scriptures, prayer, and religious conversation, are not their delight. They practically say, as those of old, “ What a weariness is it ?” They regret their undertaking ; they repent of their vows ; would rejoice to be freed from them, and from the watch of their brethren. Their secret feeling is, that were



they now free, they would not again be thus involved. But as they have sworn, though it be to their hurt, they must endeavor to perform it, so far as to pass along, without special ground of censure, from their brethren. Their practical enquiry appears to be, not how much they may be able to do for God ; but how little will answer their obligations, or preserve them a decent reputation among men. Of consequence, whatever they do, in discharge of their covenant obligations, is with a spirit of bondage, and of hypocrisy. The ways of God are grievous to them, and his service a burden. If such flatter themselves with a hope, that they shall be accepted of God, they are self-deceived. Their hope, in the end, will be like the giving up of the ghost. But with David, it was not thus ; neither will it ever be thus, with any of the real people of God. They approve of their vows. They are willing, they desire, they rejoice to be bound to the Lord in covenant ; and to be under the strongest obligations, to keep his righteous judgments. The ways of wisdom appear to them, ways of pleasantness and peace. The daily Christian duties enjoined upon them, are not their burden. Their greatest burden and sorrow are, their daily and great imperfections in the discharge of their duties. They desire not to be freed from the duty of prayer. It is their delight ; the life of their souls. Without access to the throne of grace, through the Mediator, they would indeed be unhappy,—yea, would perish ; for they have no sufficiency of themselves, to withstand temptation. It is only by derived strength, by the Spirit of God, that they are able, in any degree, to perform their vows. Of this they are sensible, and when they, in a great measure, lose the spirit of prayer, which is sometimes the case for a season, through the power of indwelling sin, they are then in distress. But their great desire is, not to be freed from the duty of prayer, but to receive the spirit of it. Their language is



with Job, " Oh, that I knew where I might find him ! that I might come, even unto his seat ! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."

They desire not to be freed from their obligations, to attend constantly upon the public worship of God. They can say with David, " How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they go from strength to strength. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

They are not displeased with being obligated to search the scriptures daily. They esteem this a peculiar privilege ; and were they to be deprived of it, they would lose their principal source of comfort and edification. David spake the feelings of every Christian, respecting the word of God, when he said, " Oh, how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day. Thy word is my comfort in affliction. It is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Thy testimonies, have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart."

They desire not to be freed from the watch of their Christian brethren ; but are ready to say, " Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."

But I need not enlarge. It is sufficient to say, that the people of God repent not of their vows, and that they love the good ways of the Lord. Although a strict adherence to the path of duty may require much self-denial, as it may bring upon them the opposition of a wicked world, so that their souls may be filled with the contempt of the proud, and the scorning of them that are at ease ; " Yet none of these things greatly move them." There is a joy and peace in believing, possessed by all those who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow

Christ, a joy and peace, which the world cannot give by its smiles, nor take away by its frowns.

The language of David, relative to this, is the language and feeling of all the children of God: "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, and in keeping of them, there is great reward. Make me to go in the way of thy commandments, for therein do I delight. I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things, to be right, and I hate every false way. Oh, that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!"

Thus it appears, by appealing to the feelings of Christians, and to the language of scripture saints, that the people of God repent not of their vows to be the Lord's, nor are weary of his service. They may say, as an eminent man of God said, "I am weary in thy service, but not of it." The further they proceed, the stronger are their desires to press forward. If they are filled with sorrow of heart, it is not because they have sworn to the Lord, but because they have failed, in the performance of their vows. They will be ready, therefore, to renew them, in the strength of Christ, and to say, with the Psalmist, "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

What remains is a brief

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. This subject may be instructive to those, who think of joining themselves to the professing people of God, and attending upon sealing ordinances. You see what is required, and what is implied in these things. They imply that you avouch the Lord Jehovah to be your God, and yourselves to be his people and friends. This is a transaction, in which you are to bind yourselves, by a solemn covenant and oath, to be the Lord's, and to keep his righteous judgments, consecrating to him, all that you have and

are, the faculties of your minds, the members of your bodies, your worldly possessions, your time, and your influence over others ; all to be employed, in obedience to his commands, and used entirely for his glory. It implies that you choose the Lord, for your portion, his sacred word, for your guide ; his people, for your companions and friends ; and a holy heaven, for your final home. If any are conscious, that this is their choice ; if they desire to be the Lord's, in the strongest bonds ; and if they delight in his judgments ; they have the best evidence, that they are qualified to profess religion, and attend on sealing ordinances.

2. This subject brings into view, the peculiar guilt, and aggravated wickedness of professing Christians, who are conformed to the world, and disregard the statutes and judgments of the Lord. Such, having sworn to the Lord, and consecrated themselves to his service, cannot sin, at so cheap a rate, as others ; every act of disobedience is attended with circumstances, which render it peculiarly heinous, in the sight of God. They are in a situation, to let their light shine, which might be the means of salvation to others. But if their light be darkness, they may be instrumental of destroying many, and thus finally be found guilty of the blood of souls.

Their sins, being also against the most solemn vows, will be of the nature of perjury. In this view, how aggravated do the sins of professing Christians appear ; and how awful must be the destruction of hypocrites !

Yet let not sinners, who make no profession of religion, misimprove this truth, by flattering themselves, that they are less criminal than others. Are you safe because others are more criminal ? Is it safe for you, to refuse to vow and pay, as you are commanded, and as you are conscious is your reasonable service, because others, who have vowed,

have neglected to perform their oaths? Is it wise to enquire, how you may sin, at the cheapest rate? Or, is it wise to spend time, in searching for a way, in which you may go down to hell, in the easiest manner? Would it not be wiser for you to enquire, how you may become reconciled to God, and escape the wrath to come?

3. Let us, my brethren, apply this subject, by way of self-examination.

We have avouched the Lord Jehovah, to be our God, and ourselves to be his people; yea, we have sworn to the Lord, and bound ourselves by covenant vows, which we have also repeatedly renewed, at the Lord's table. But the question arises, in view of what has been said, are we pleased with our vows? Have we, in any good measure, performed them?

Suffer me to put the following questions, to my own conscience, and to each of yours. Have you, O professing Christians, given evidence, by your walk, that God's judgments and commandments are the rejoicing of your hearts? Have you considered your time, talents, and possessions, as the Lord's, and used them all as his property, entrusted to your care? Have you loved the cause of truth, and followed the things which make for peace, and the things whereby one may edify another? Have you walked before your families, in a holy manner? Have you taught; faithfully taught those, under your care, by precept and example, the right ways of the Lord? Have you delighted in prayer, in the daily reading of the scriptures, and in attendance on the public worship of God? Have you walked in humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, and kindness towards all men? In a word, have you, in any good measure, taken up your cross, and followed Christ? On the contrary, are not some of you conscious, that you are weary of God's ways? Do you not regret your vows, and feel as if you had sworn to your

hurt? Are you not weary of prayer, of the sabbath, of searching the scriptures, and of daily duties, so that you begin greatly to neglect them? Is it not your desire, to get along as easy as you can; and are you not, consequently, conformed to the world? Do you not begin to seek the company, the connection, and the conversation of the vain and worldly, in preference to the company of those, who are heavenly-minded, who think upon the name of the Lord, and speak often one to another? Do you not conduct, as if ashamed of Jesus? Do you not avoid religious conversation, and when it is introduced by others, are you not pained and speechless? Are you not ready to complain of your brethren, who would be faithful to perform their vows, to watch over others, accusing them of being Pharisaical, and righteous overmuch? Do you not, my brethren and sisters, find, at least some of these questions, applicable to yourselves? If so, you are deceiving yourselves, and destroying your own souls, and the souls of others? How unhappy is your condition! You are restrained from indulging, as you would wish, in sinful pleasures, by the watch of your brethren, and by a regard to your reputation. And yet you have no pleasure in God and religion. This is indeed an unhappy, as well as a dangerous state. Be exhorted, therefore, to become reconciled to God, that you may rejoice in his righteous judgments; for "great peace have all they, who love God's law."

Must we not all confess, my brethren, that we have fallen greatly short of performing our vows? Let us, therefore, as the only way to enjoy more comfort, in the light of God's countenance, renew them, in the strength of the Lord, saying, with David, in the text, "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

Let us remember that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." Men know not the heart. We



may so perform our vows, as to appear well to them, when we are wholly faulty, in the sight of Him, who looketh on the heart. Let us, therefore, give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let every one who nameth the name of Christ, be careful to depart from iniquity. We are a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. Let us not be deceived; God is not mocked. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Amen.





---

## S E R M O N XII.

### AN ORDINATION SERMON.

STRENGTH ORDAINED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES.

---

#### PSALM VIII. 2.

*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies ; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

THE chief design of this Psalm appears to be, to praise God for the display of his glory in the creature man ; or, for the honor and dignity conferred on him, in his being ordained to be an instrument, to still, or confound and destroy the enemy ; and to be exalted from a *lower* to a *higher* degree of glory and happiness, than that of the angels. It thus begins, " O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! thou hast set thy glory above the heavens." From this solemn invocation and ascription of praise, the Psalmist passes to consider and dwell upon what God has done ; on account of which, he is thus worthy of praise ; and by which he has displayed and exalted his glory above the heavens. "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies ; that thou mightest*

still the enemy and the avenger." And, to express his astonishment at the infinite goodness and *condescension* of God herein, he adds, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, What is *man*, that thou art mindful of him; and the *the son of man*, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

This psalm had, doubtless, a primary reference to the *first Adam* and his posterity; as having dominion over the creatures, and the works of God in this world; and being but a little lower than the angels, in the scale of intelligence, and in point of honor and dignity.—But there is, evidently, an *ultimate* and *principal* reference to *the seed of the woman*, or second Adam and his posterity, or the exaltation of the human nature, as redeemed and united to the son of God in his incarnation. This is evident from several passages in the New Testament. Particularly, from Hebrews, second chapter; where the apostle introduces this Psalm to prove, that Jesus Christ is above the angels, and is exalted, in his incarnate person, to universal dominion, and to be the triumphant conqueror of all his enemies. As in verse six and onward: "One, in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels—thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thine hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." The apostle then adds, "We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower (or, as it may be rendered—*for a little while* lower) than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." And, in 1 Cor. xv. 25. it is said, "He (i. e.

Christ in his human nature) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." And this is supported in ver. 27, by a direct quotation from the sixth verse of this Psalm, in these words, "for he hath put all things under his feet."

Such is the New Testament exposition of the leading sentiments of this Psalm. And the words of our text, evidently refer to the same subject. They are expressive of the peculiar manner, in which infinite wisdom sees fit to effect the designs of his goodness, and confound and silence his enemies: viz. By *means* and *instruments*, weak and insufficient in themselves, but *strong* and effectual by the power and wisdom of God. "Out of the mouth of BABES, thou hast ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest *still* the enemy and the avenger."—And by the subject of the Psalm, and the connection of the words, by *babes*, here, we may understand the church of Christ and his members. *The man Christ Jesus*, who, as we have shown, is the principal subject of this Psalm, was, in the beginning, literally a *babe*. He was the babe of Bethlehem—the person respected by the prophet, that should "grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." And, as he is the principal member, the head of the body, of which his brethren are the inferior members, therefore, the text may be understood as referring to him, inclusive of his members. This sense does not exclude the idea, of young children being brought to experience the grace of God, and to praise him with their mouths. Whenever there are instances of this, it is then literally true, that out of the mouth of babes, God has ordained strength, to still the enemy. The words, however, are not necessarily limited to such cases. They may refer to all those, out of whose mouths God ordains strength, or perfects praise, of whatever age or condition they may be. Such may, in figurative language, with propriety be called babes; to

intimate their weakness as instruments, and in acknowledgment of the divine power and wisdom, which are perfected and displayed in them.

If we admit this construction of the text, and by babes understand the seed of the woman, or the man Christ Jesus and his brethren; then, of course, by the enemy and avenger, to be opposed and silenced, or overcome, must be understood, the serpent and his seed, or the enemies of God and his church. And this doctrine will appear to be contained in them: viz. That however unlikely it may appear, to an eye of sense, yet, the church, or Christ and his members, shall prevail against their enemies, and triumph over all opposition, to the praise of divine power and grace.

In illustrating this doctrine, I shall

I. Notice the great disproportion, or inequality which there is between the church and its enemies; and the improbability, to a view of sense, that the former should ever prevail.

II. Attend to the reasons, on which we may ground our confidence, that these *babes* shall finally prevail and triumph over all opposition.

III. Consider the means by which they shall overcome, or the peculiar way, in which strength is perfected in them, to still the enemy and avenger.

I. I am to notice the great disproportion, or inequality which there is between the church and its enemies; and the improbability, to a view of sense, that the former should ever prevail.—This view of the subject may be useful.

We are naturally led to it from the peculiar phraseology of the text. The phrase, chosen by the Holy Ghost, to describe the church as compared with the enemies with whom they have to contend, is “*babes*

and *sucklings*." In this view it must appear very unlikely, to an eye of sense, that they should ever prevail over their enemies. To those who view Christ's followers as one with him, and who view him as the Son of God, there could be no doubt of their success. This would be a view of faith. But to an eye of sense, there appears as great an inequality between the church and its enemies, as between babes and giants; and as small a prospect of success. This is not only the representation of the text, but of numerous other passages of sacred writ; two or three of which will be adduced.

In the description which God gives of the church, of his and their enemies, Isaiah xli. 14, 15. the church is called a worm, and the enemy are called mountains, by which we should suppose a worm might easily be crushed. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob—thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small." Christ, also, compares himself to a worm, Psalm xxii. 6. "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of man and despised of the people." But he compares his enemies, and the enemies of his people, to bulls of Bashan and roaring lions. And in Luke x. 3. he compares his followers to sheep, and their enemies to wolves. "Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves." The propriety of these representations will appear, if we look to the circumstances in which Christ, the head and leader of his people, came into the world, and engaged in contest with the enemy and avenger, and in which his disciples and followers also engaged. How unfavorable was the situation of the world? Idolatry universally prevailed. All the kingdoms and empires of the world were under the influence of Satan, the grand adversary, who was then, eminently, god of this world, and ruled in the hearts of all, except a little number, who were the church of God among the Jews. In such circumstances Christ entered the world, to undertake against the enemy. He entered as a babe, poor, weak and



helpless. He lived thirty years, almost unnoticed by the world. And when he entered upon his ministry, and proclaimed himself the Messiah, he was despised and rejected. None, except a few women and illiterate fishermen, received him. His enemies conspired against him ; nor did they rest 'till they had nailed him to the cross, where he bled and died. In this situation, betrayed, denied, and forsaken by his friends, and triumphed over by his enemies, what prospect was there, to an eye of sense, that he would yet triumph over all opposition, and establish himself and people !

And when he sent out his apostles and ministers into the world, to subdue the enemy—to proclaim the gospel, and set up his kingdom upon the ruin of Satan's, how insufficient and unequal did they appear to the task ? They were, indeed, as babes. They went out a company of weak, and for the most part, illiterate men, and entirely destitute of worldly support. They went into a prejudiced world, where all were engaged against them. They were to preach a doctrine, which was above the comprehension of the most of their hearers, and greatly mortifying to their pride. They were to condemn the religious and idolatrous practices of the nations, to which they were sent. They were to command them, upon the penalty of endless misery, to discard all their former Gods and idolatrous practices—to believe in a crucified Jew, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. And, forsaking all, to take up the cross and follow him : and to be ready to meet the scorn, contempt, and persecution of the world, and even death itself. Nor were they to hold out any reward to their hearers, even in another world, except one of such a nature as had no charms, in the views of wicked men. When the false prophet, Mahomet, sent forth his disciples, he gave them a doctrine, perfectly calculated to gratify the lusts, appetites, and passions of men. But Christ's disciples went out into the

world, with a religion to which the world of mankind were wholly opposed ; and with doctrines calculated to bring this opposition into exercise, and to stir up all the powers of darkness against them. In these circumstances how unequal was the contest ? what prospect was there that they would succeed, except to an eye of faith ? Nor are present prospects, to an eye of sense, essentially different. The carnal heart is still the same, and the gospel is the same—a stumbling-block and foolishness to worldly men. “The heathen still rage, and the people imagine a vain thing—the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed ; saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, and the Lord shall have them in derision.”

This leads us,

II. To consider the reasons, on which our confidence may be grounded, that these babes shall finally prevail and triumph over all opposition.

And here I would observe,

1. That the promises, which God hath made, are an ample ground of confidence. God is able, out of the mouth of babes, to perfect strength ; and he has pledged his faithfulness that he will do it. He has promised, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head—that he will build up his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He says, by the prophet Isaiah, “ No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper—behold, all they that be incensed against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel—thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and thou shalt rejoice in the

Lord, and glory in the holy one of Israel." Promises of this nature, are to be found in almost every page of the sacred scriptures.

2. Past and present experience is another ground of confidence.

There have been numerous instances in which these babes, when in the most unpromising circumstances, contrary to all human probability, have received strength, to triumph over the most formidable opposition. Christ himself, when he came into the world, in the unpromising situation which has been described, had strength to confound his enemies; even in death he conquered, and led captivity captive, and will reign, till all his enemies shall be made his footstool. His disciples and apostles also, when they went forth to preach his gospel to an opposing world, were enabled by the power of God, which was made perfect in their weakness, to confound the enemy and avenger, and to spread the triumphs of the cross. All the conquests of the Alexanders and Cæsars of the world shrink, in comparison with the conquests of these babes. In one age their line went out into almost every part of the habitable world; wherever they went they overturned idolatry, shook the foundation of Satan's kingdom, and built up the kingdom of God upon its ruins. Nor at the present day does God leave himself without witness. In the most unlikely places, and by the weakest means, the most obstinate enemies and despisers of Jesus have been brought to bow at his name. Where the standard of the avenger and enemy lately stood, and bid bold defiance to the captain of our salvation, the banner of his cross now waves, and thousands flock to it. The number of the babes, and their confidence in God is increased, while the enemy are weakened. And thus it will continue to be, from time to time, until that day of God's power arrive, when all his elect people shall be gathered in and made willing—when

converts shall exceed the drops of the morning dew, and the enemy and avenger be confounded and put to eternal shame. The reasons on which we found our hope and confidence of all this, as we have suggested, are, the promises of God, with the past and present experience he has given of his faithfulness and power.

It remains,

III. To consider the manner, in which strength is perfected out of the mouth of babes ; or the peculiar way in which the church are enabled to withstand opposition and still the enemy.

I would here observe, that the way in and by which strength is perfected out of the mouth of babes is, principally, by prayer ; by a bold and consistent confession of the name of Christ ; and by faithfully preaching the gospel. Hence the reason and propriety of the phraseology of our text : “ Out of the mouth of babes, hast thou ordained strength.”

1. One peculiar way in which the people of God are enabled to withstand opposition, and become instrumental of stilling the enemy, is by prayer.

Christ himself, when on earth, opposed the enemy in this way. He was much in prayer for himself and his disciples, and for all who were given to him of the Father. His prayers were prevalent, and all the schemes of the enemy and avenger, relative to his death and the destruction of the church, were disconcerted. All the followers of Christ endeavor to imitate him in this example, and give themselves unto prayer. The efficacy of prayer in building up the cause of God—in obtaining deliverance and mercies for the church and for individuals, and strengthening them for the Christian warfare, is wonderful. Under all distresses, from within and without, the children of God have, in every age, found relief, and been made strong by the power of God. All, therefore,

who have a spirit of prayer, are safe, whatever apparent danger arise ; because they have power to prevail with God, and to overcome the world. God hath promised to the seed of Jacob, that they shall not seek him in vain. And his address to Jacob, when he had wrestled with the angel, is applicable to all, who have a true spirit of prayer. “ Thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

2. Another way, in which the friends of Jesus are enabled to still the enemy, is by a bold and consistent confession of the name of Christ, before men.

Every one who makes a public confession of Christ, or a profession of faith in him, joining to his people, and observing his ordinances and commands, honors the cause, brings an accession of strength to it, and proportionably weakens the cause of the enemy and avenger. It must, however, be a consistent confession. The language of the life, must accord with the language of the mouth. There must be, also, a continuance in professing Christ and espousing his cause, upon all proper occasions ; even in a time of danger ; and a readiness to contend earnestly for the faith of the gospel, when attacked by enemies.

Christ himself witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. And he requires of all his followers, that they be ready to confess him before men, although it should be at the risque of life. And when he warned his disciples, that they should be carried before kings and princes for his sake, he added, I will give you a mouth, that none of your adversaries shall be able to stand before it. We have an eminent instance of the fulfilment of this prediction, and of strength thus perfected out of the mouth of babes, in Acts, Chap. iv. The apostles being called before the Jewish rulers, to answer by what name they had healed an impotent man, with a view to entrapping and confounding them, they readily witnes-



sed the following noble confession: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him, does this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby ye must be saved." Here was strength to still the enemy; for when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and took notice that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled—they were confounded, and began to consult privately what they should do? expressing doubts, whether they should succeed in their opposition.

Instances of persecution for the truth, and acts of violence, are not so frequent, at the present day, although instances are not wanting. But attempts to injure the cause of Christ, by sophistry, ridicule, and cavilling against the truth and against the preachers of it, are not wanting. False teachers also arise, and men of corrupt minds, who attempt to warp the minds of the unwary from the truth to their corrupt ways. Such, therefore, must be opposed, by "contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered unto the saints." In this way strength has often been perfected out of the mouth of babes, strength sufficient to still the enemy, silence their cavils, and more and more to increase the light, and establish the truth on an immovable foundation.

3. Another eminent and peculiar way, in which the disciples of Christ are enabled effectually to oppose the enemy, is by faithfully preaching the gospel.

In this way much has been done, by the mouth of babes, to still the enemy, and build up the gospel kingdom. When Christ sent forth his apostles and ministers to conquer the world, and deliver it from the dominion of Satan, what were the weapons? They



were not carnal but spiritual. The principal one was the word of God, which is the "sword of the spirit." They were directed to preach the gospel. A preached gospel is denominated, the wisdom of God, and the power of God to the salvation of sinners. Therefore the apostle says, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us who are saved it is the power of God. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; we preach Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God." Experience has shown, that the faithful preaching of the gospel is greatly feared and peculiarly opposed, by the enemy and avenger. It is that by which God does effectually beat down his strong holds—delivers his miserable captives, and destroys every thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.

Thus I have briefly considered, the unpromising situation of the church, to an eye of sense, with respect to its enemies—the ground of confidence that it shall prevail—and some of the principal ways, by which it is enabled to withstand opposition; or, by which God has ordained and perfects strength out of the mouth of babes, to still the enemy and avenger. I would now request the attention of my audience, to some of the inferences and reflections, which the subject suggests. And,

1. From what has been said on this subject, we are led to admire and adore the wisdom and goodness of God, in the plan and work of redemption.

By a close attention to the subject of the text and context, and the things they suggest, such a view of the divine plan rises before the mind, as is too sublime to be expressed, or adequately to be conceived; and most strongly evinces the divinity of the sacred scriptures, which reveal it. Although God in all things seeks his own glory, yet he seeks and can accomplish it, in no other way than by displaying him-

self in the communication of being and blessedness. For this, therefore, he created the universe. For this he, in eternity, in his all disposing counsel, contemplated the existence of intelligent creatures—men and angels; and also of moral and natural evil; without which creatures could never have so sensibly felt or realized their dependence and obligations to God for all their happiness—nor have seen all the divine perfections acted out. For this, also, he eternally contemplated the plan of redemption, and elected the babes, the man Christ Jesus and his brethren, to be the most highly favored subjects of his kingdom. He ordained strength out of their mouths, that they might be instruments of confounding the enemy and avenger, and of displaying the riches of his grace. In this way he has rendered his name excellent in all the earth, and exalted his glory above the heavens.

The manner, also, in which the work of redemption is carried on in the world, claims our admiration and praise. It is such as is calculated to display the power and wisdom of God. He has chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Christianity being circumstanced as we have seen,—its being for the most part a suffering cause, and, to an eye of sense, unlikely to be supported, not only serves to draw a line between the friends and enemies of Christ, but it proves an excellent trial to real Christians. It serves to realize to them their dependence. It gives them constant occasion for the exercise of faith in the all-sufficiency of God, and in his faithfulness to his word. It excites to watchfulness and prayer, and by calling into exercise, it increases and strengthens all their graces.

2. We learn from this subject, that it is important Christians should desire and strive to live in the constant exercise of a lively faith.—Nothing else will

encourage them to exertion—nothing else will render them confident of success, and be productive of real peace, in view of the generally low state of religion—the weakness of its friends, and the strength of the enemy. In proportion as faith is weak, and Christians begin to judge by an eye of sense, they will indulge doubts and fears—they will be alarmed and anxious, and tremble for the ark of God. In this way they may dishonor God—grieve his Holy Spirit, and give the enemy and avenger great advantage against them. Hence the importance of a lively faith and trust in God at all times.

3. The subject may afford abundant consolation and encouragement, to the people of God, at the present day, and in all times of darkness and difficulty.

The present, notwithstanding the many manifestations of divine power, in building up his kingdom, is a day of great opposition to the church and cause of God. In many places, infidelity, error, and iniquity abound—the love of many waxes cold, and the enemy triumphs. A great part of the world lieth in wickedness, its inhabitants being under the dominion of the adversary of souls. In many parts, pagan idolatry prevails—in some Mahometan delusion—in some, popish superstition, and in many, infidel philosophy and atheism. The spirits of devils, even all the agents of the enemy and avenger, appear to be gone forth into the earth, to gather nations to battle against God. In opposition to this numerous and formidable host, there are a few *babes*—a few followers of the Lamb, scattered through the world. They are forces, however, or instruments in the hand of God; and out of their mouths he will perfect strength. By the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, they will prevail and overcome. Never were such exertions made, to destroy any other society or institution, as there have been

to destroy the church of Christ. Kingdoms and societies of men, which have appeared an hundred fold stronger than the church, have been destroyed by a thousandth part of the opposition, which *that* has received and triumphed over. It has, indeed, often been brought low; but strength was ordained—it has been raised, and the divine hand been the more conspicuous. Here then is ground for consolation, in every day of trial. Opposition may continue and increase—be much greater and more bitter than at present, even to violence, before the glorious Millennium day: but the Lord is at hand, and his people may always be addressed in his own words, “Fear not, little flock.”

4. From what has been said, let all be cautioned, not to be found engaged on the side of opposition to Christ and his people.—To use the words of Gamaliel, “Refrain from these men: for if this work or this counsel be of men, it will come to nought.” But it has not come to nought. It has withstood earth and hell for 1800 years. It is therefore of God. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, and will be found fighting against God. Let all, therefore, who are opposed (and every impenitent sinner is opposed) be exhorted to refrain from opposition, and to come over on the Lord’s side. Opposition is in vain—it is folly and madness. As well might the briars and thorns set themselves in array against the fire.—“Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth.”

5. From this subject we are taught, what is the proper business of Christians, and what they must exert themselves to do, would they be instruments in the hand of God, to still the enemy, and advance the cause of God, in their own hearts and in the world.

They must give themselves unto *prayer* ; and make a *bold* and *consistent* confession of the name of Christ, and be ready to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints. They must preach the gospel. This, as has been shown is a weapon, mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, and every thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Or if we are not qualified for this, and have not a call to preach the gospel, still we are obligated to send a preached gospel unto others. We are bound to contribute to send forth preachers to destitute places, where they are either unable or unwilling to support them. Nor is ridicule or opposition a sufficient reason, why we should desist. It is to be expected, that the avenger will stir up opposition, in every possible form, when attacked in his strong holds. Had the apostles and primitive Christians desisted from their exertions, on account of opposition and discouraging appearances, the gospel, my brethren, would never have reached our ears. If we shrink from the difficulties involved in an attempt, to propagate the gospel among the destitute, or of supporting missions, and say, it will be in vain, we shall manifest that we judge by an eye of sense, and consider not that God is able to perfect strength in this way. In this way, God has, heretofore, ordained strength to still the enemy and spread the gospel. Blessed be his name that he is, even now, giving such evidence of his approbation of the exertions of his people, to advance his glory in this way, and such encouragement to them to proceed. Blessed be God, that he has opened the hearts of many, in various parts of the world, to contribute liberally of their substance, and of some to devote their time and talents to the arduous but important work of evangelizing the heathen ; or of carrying the gospel and its precious ordinances to our brethren, in the borders of the wilderness. The occasion of this day, my brethren, renders these thoughts pe-



cularly interesting, and is my apology for particularly introducing them. It is a witness to us for God, that he is gracious—that he hears the cry of his children, and will carry on his own work, and that he has the hearts of all in his hands. He has inclined the heart of our young brother, the youth who now presents himself before the Lord, to receive commission to preach the gospel. He has inclined his heart to carry the glad tidings into the wilderness, to the poor and destitute, and cheerfully to submit to the peculiar trials and arduous services of a missionary life. And you are soon to witness the solemn and interesting scene, of setting him apart to the important work. You will, therefore, suffer me to address a few words to him, as propriety dictates, on so interesting an occasion.

DEAR BROTHER,

The situation in which you this day stand is interesting and solemn. The king of Zion is now present in the instituted authorities of his church; and you have presented yourself before them, to receive commission, according to divine institution, to preach the gospel, and dispense the mysteries of the kingdom of God to perishing sinners. The eye of God is upon you—He discovers all your views and all your motives, in presenting yourself.—The solemn scene is also witnessed by men and angels; and your ordination vows, now to be made, will be registered in heaven. May the Lord support you, in the solemn transaction—enable you to be deeply humble, and sincerely, cheerfully, and unreservedly to devote yourself to the important work to which you are called.

The subject, my brother, which we have been contemplating, must have been interesting to your feelings; and suggested thoughts applicable to the transaction before you. It must have suggested, that the work which you desire is a good and honor-



able work. To be commissioned to carry the light of life to the ignorant and benighted—to preach good tidings to the meek—to bind up the broken hearted—to proclaim liberty to the miserable captives of Satan, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; and in this way be an instrument, in the hand of God, to still the enemy and avenger—how good the work—how honorable the employment ! You will, doubtless, be ready to adopt, with humility and thoughtfulness, the words of the apostle, “ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.” But the work, although good and honorable, is *great* and *arduous*.—You must expect, in the prosecution of it, to meet with peculiar difficulties, trials, and oppositions—oppositions from without and within—from the remaining corruptions of your own heart—from the passions and prejudices of unreasonable men—from the alluring vanities and distracting cares of the world—from the threatening prevalence of irreligion, profanity, and infidelity, and from the subtile devices and artful machinations of Satan, the grand enemy and avenger. But, be not discouraged. Go forth in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts. Give no place to the devil—retreat not for a moment. Maintain your ground, as a good soldier in the battle of the Lord. Let none of these things move you—count not your life dear to you, so that you may finish your course with joy, and the ministry which you, this day, receive of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel. At all times realize your dependence and insufficiency, and trust only in him, who is able out of the mouth of babes to ordain strength.

Let me add, that would you hope to be accepted of God, and succeeded in your work, as an instrument to still the enemy and avenger, and to build up the kingdom of God, all the duties incumbent on Christians, which have been suggested by our subject, are

peculiarly incumbent on you. See to it, therefore, that you be much in prayer. You will not have great success in appeasing the enemy, nor be comforting and edifying to God's children, nor will you have comfort under trials, unless you are a man of prayer. Where can you go for counsel and direction, under the trials of the ministry, except to God?—Be consistent also in your confession of Christ.—Maintain a holy conversation, and bring not a reproach upon the sacred office, by a loose and unholy life. Be faithful, also, in preaching the gospel, wherever you are called. Declare the whole counsel of God, keep back nothing.—While you choose acceptable words, carefully avoid the temporizing spirit, which would conceal the searching and humbling truths of the gospel, under a specious covering. How many, alas, in this way, handle the word of God deceitfully ! The words of such still not the enemy, neither do they displease, because they strike not at the foundation of his kingdom. To guard you from unfaithfulness, to which there are so many temptations from the fear of man, and a regard to popular applause, remember, my brother, that you are a dying man, and will preach to dying men. Shortly, you must stand at the bar of God, and give an account of your stewardship—remember, that there may probably, be many unfaithful ministers at the left hand of Christ, at his appearing, whose guilt will be awfully aggravated. But, we hope better things of you ; yea, we have great confidence in you. We trust the grace of God is in your heart, and that it is your prayer that you may be faithful. This is the prayer of God's people this day. We commend you to God, and the guidance of his spirit.

May the Lord be with you; wherever, in his providence, you shall be called—give you strength according to your day ; and perfect strength out of your mouth, to still the enemy. May the blessing of many ready to perish come upon you ; and may

you have many souls, who shall be seals of your ministry, and crowns of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

Fathers and brethren, and all who hear me this day. This is a solemn occasion, and very interesting to us all. It is calculated to impress the importance of the subject of this discourse. How great is the goodness and condescension of God, in carrying on a treaty of reconciliation with mankind ! And how does it call for our adoration and praise, that he has chosen sinful man, to be the medium of displaying his most glorious perfections !

Let us be impressed with a sense of our dependence on God, and the importance of imploring his blessing on all our endeavors. If any thing is effected by the means we use, it is through the efficiency of God. He ordains and perfects strength out of the mouth of babes. If we are disposed to engage in God's service—if we are furnished to duty—if we are successful and instrumental of good to our fellow creatures, and of advancing the cause of the Redeemer, it is all of the Lord, who worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. It ever becomes us to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

Let us all reflect on our situations, characters, and prospects—on what God has done for mankind—the glory which he has revealed, and the aggravated guilt of those who reject his grace, and devote their lives to the service of the enemy and avenger. God has given his only begotten and dearly beloved son to die for sinners—He has raised him from the dead, and exalted him far above all principality and power. All who believe on him shall, in due time, follow him and sit with him on his throne, and share with him in all his glory. By means of their union and relation to the man Christ Jesus, they will be exalted in glory and

happiness, and afford the brightest exhibition of God's perfections to all intelligences.

What an object is here ! what a prospect have we before us ! Shall we not have respect to it ? Shall we not prefer the afflictions of the people of God to the pleasures of sin ? How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation ? Therefore, " Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."



---

## S E R M O N XIII.

### FRAILITY OF MAN.

---

#### ISAIAH II. 22.

*Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ;  
for wherein is he to be accounted of ?*

THESE words can never be unseasonably addressed to those who place an undue dependence on any worldly enjoyment ; nor will they be uninteresting to those who feel the importance of seeking higher aid, and more permanent objects of trust, than this world can afford. They imply, that mankind are prone to place an undue dependence and affection upon creatures, and suggest very important motives to dissuade from a conduct so sinful and unwise.

In discoursing from them, I shall consider them as the call of God to *us*, and to *every one*, to cease from man—to cease from *all men*—all *mere creatures*, whatever may be their character, or however promising their condition or prospects. In prosecuting the subject, I shall,

I. Remark briefly upon the import of the expression, “ Cease ye from man.”



II. Consider and illustrate the proposition implied in the text, that mankind are prone to place an undue dependence and affection upon creatures.

III. Offer some considerations to enforce the dissuasion, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

I. What is implied in the expression, "Cease ye from man?"

Here I observe, negatively, that it does not imply, that we are to disconnect ourselves from the society and friendship of our fellow creatures, nor does it imply, that we are to exercise *no affection* towards them; nor that we are to hope for no comfort, consolation, or assistance from their love and friendship, while we sojourn in this vale of tears. On the contrary, we are commanded to love all as ourselves, to exercise a tender affection towards those who are nearly connected with us. We are permitted to look to them as instruments of good in the hand of God. We are allowed to hope for consolation from them—to hope, that they may be the means of leading us to God, and of exciting emotions of gratitude to Him, who is the prime author of all good, and the disposer of events.

But the words, "Cease ye from man," imply these two things :

1. We ought not to place an undue dependence, nor any undue or excessive *affection* upon creatures, or any worldly enjoyment. We ought not to place dependence upon man, or put trust or confidence in the children of men, for strength or assistance to deliver us from any evils, or produce any good, otherwise than as *means and instruments* in the hand of God, and commissioned by him.

2. We should withdraw our confidence and trust from creatures. We should consider their impotence, and place confidence and dependence for assistance, both with respect to time and eternity, in Him alone who changeth not, and who hath everlasting strength. We ought to cease from an undue *affection* to man. Our supreme affection is due to God. It ought not therefore to be placed on any other object—not even upon our nearest and dearest worldly connections. There is a proper affection to these, which may be great and strong ; but if it be not subordinate to the love of God, it is of a wrong nature.

“Cease ye from man.” Cease from trusting him. Cease from all undue affection, or idolatrous fondness towards him. “Set your affections on things above—not on things on the earth.”

II. I proceed to consider and illustrate the proposition, that mankind, both good and bad, are prone to place an undue dependence and affection upon creatures. This is implied in the text, and is evident from all the numerous passages of scripture, in which we are cautioned against an improper attachment to the things of this world, and forbidden to trust in man, in whom there is no help.

It is evident also from experience. How apt are we in civil, religious, and social life, to look to creatures—to means and instruments for help, without a proper feeling of dependence on God ! How many are ready to say, that might we have but such and such men set to rule over us, the laws and the times would be better, and we should have greater public happiness and prosperity—not considering, that the hearts of kings and of all rulers are in the hand of the Lord, so that he can turn them whithersoever he will—disconcert every pernicious counsel, and cause even the wicked to rule well, or to do those things which shall be for the good of a people.

Whenever we are prepared for his favors, he has favors in store for us.

How apt are we also to think, that if we might set under *such* and *such* ministers of the gospel as we could mention, or if our minister had such gifts and qualifications as we could describe, we should be more edified and engaged ; infidelity and error would not be so prevalent, and religion would revive among us—not considering that a “ Paul may plant, and an Apollos water” in vain, unless God give increase.

How prone are we, moreover, in social and relative life, to consider, or, at least, to *treat*, our friends, our children, or near connections as if they were *necessary* to our comfort, and as if all our happiness depended upon *them*—not considering the important truth, that

“ Nor children, relatives or friends  
Can real blessings prove,  
Nor all the worldly good he sends,  
If sent without his love.”

So with respect to an undue affection, we are very prone to exercise it towards near friends and connections ; even to be so much bound up in them, as to encroach upon duty while they are continued, and render us almost comfortless when they are taken away. The reason of this is, the depraved disposition there is in all, “ To love the creature more than the Creator”—a disposition to be independent of God. This evil disposition is described, in the word of God, under the names of the flesh—the old man—indwelling sin. This operates with full strength in the unregenerate, and, though weakened and mortified in true believers, yet, is not wholly eradicated.

And as all are prone to place an undue dependence and affection upon their friends and near connections, so Christians are exceedingly apt to fall into it, on account of their being really one of the greatest comforts and consolations of life ; and especially be-

cause they view such enjoyments as lawful in themselves, and approved of God.

Christians are generally *shocked* rather than seduced by temptations to gross sins. They are ready to say, with the patriarch of old, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!" Yet they are in danger of abusing lawful things—and especially that of affection to creatures, and the consolation they are permitted to hope for from them. Their danger arises from their propensity to exercise an improper trust and dependence. Hence the importance of the dissuasion in the text, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

III. It remains to enforce this dissuasion by several considerations.

1. To trust in creatures, or to place too much dependence on them, or to exercise an excessive affection towards them, is *very sinful*. It has the nature of idolatry, and is therefore highly provoking to God. He has said, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." He has declared also, "That he is a jealous God, and his honor he will not give unto another." But if we love, or trust in any one, more than God, we transfer that honor to a creature, which belongs to God only, and this is *heart idolatry*.

Though we are commanded, in the scriptures, to love our friends and connections and all mankind, yet we are most pointedly cautioned against suffering our affection to creatures to rise into a competition with love to God. Very strong is the figure which Christ uses on this subject: "If any man come to me, and *hate* not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Mutual affection ought to subsist between the various relations and connections in life, proportioned to their nearness and importance ; and where it is made subservient to religion it cannot be too great. But when it encroaches upon that trust and affection, which are due to God alone, it becomes an idolatrous affection. It is exceedingly sinful and displeasing in the sight of God.

2. Another consideration to dissuade from trusting in creatures is their *insufficiency* to afford help or relief in trouble, were we permitted to trust in them. "Cease ye from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of ?" What is his strength or sufficiency to help either himself or others ? Were it not *sinful* therefore, were it not *forbidden*, to trust in man, yet the folly of it would appear, for, "Vain is the help of man." Says the Psalmist, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." And again, "Lord, give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man."

Of what avail can it be to look to creatures for help, when the soul is bowed down under afflictions ? They may indeed, by the blessing of God, be made the *means* of some relief or consolation, through their sympathy and compassion—but, merely in themselves considered, "Miserable comforters are they all."

What can the dearest and most faithful earthly friend do, what can the *united* force and skill of creatures do, towards delivering us from the temporal and spiritual troubles, which surround us ? Who can deliver us from pains and infirmities—from sickness and death ? Who can free us from the pain of a wounded conscience, or deliver us from going down to the pit, or give to God a ransom for our souls ? We may receive help from God through the *instrumentality* of creatures, but if we *look to them*, or trust in any for aid, except the living God, we shall be, "Like



the heath in the desert, which inhabiteth the parched places of the wilderness, and seeth not when good cometh."

3. The last dissuasive I shall offer against trusting in man, or exercising an excessive affection towards creatures, is *their frailty*. "Cease ye from man," says the prophet, "*whose breath is in his nostrils.*" This is a striking expression, descriptive of the shortness and uncertainty of life. "*Whose breath*"—that upon which the life of man depends—"is in his nostrils"—and may therefore be easily and quickly stopped. Whenever we breathe it out, we have not power, of ourselves, to draw it in again; nor do we know, that it will ever be permitted to return.

It is on this account chiefly—the frailty of man—that the prophet enquires, "Wherein is he to be accounted of?" Though we were permitted to trust in creatures, and though our friends, while they live, were able to give us all the aid and comfort we need, yet such is their *frailty*, that they are improper objects of *trust*, and we should be unwise to entertain raised expectations from them. As this is the argument urged by the prophet, let us, my hearers, dwell upon it, a moment, and examine the attestations of scripture and experience respecting it.

"Cease ye from man, *whose breath is in his nostrils.*" Death is ever near. We may ever say, "As the Lord liveth, there is but a step"—yea, a breath—"between us and death." "The voice," says the prophet, "said unto me, Cry. And I said, What shall I cry. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth—the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it—surely the people is grass."

In the book of Job we have numerous attestations of the like import: "For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing; because our days upon earth are a shadow. Man, that is born of a woman, is of few



days. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. I said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never cateth with pleasure.—They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them.”

The attestations of our *experience* are the same with those of scripture. We find, that no age or condition of life, however promising or prosperous, is free from the stroke of death. What multitudes of children have been cut off in the early morning of life ! How many youth, blooming and gay, have, in a moment, by some sudden and unexpected stroke of mortality—and while they were promising themselves long life—been stopped short in their career, and called to exchange time for eternity ! What multitudes, that have just entered the busy scenes of active life, and formed the tenderest connections, have been snatched suddenly from them to “the grave, the house appointed for all living !” “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” is a sentence attached to every condition in life—to old age—to youth—to childhood—to male and female—to rich and poor—to bond and free. “There is no discharge in that war.” “For it is appointed unto all men once to die, and man knoweth not his time.” “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of ?” How forcibly then do these considerations dissuade us from trusting in man ! With what unanswerable arguments do they urge us to trust in God—the living God alone—who giveth us all our abiding consolation and safety !

Having considered the proneness of mankind to place their affections upon creatures and worldly enjoyments, and to entertain raised and unreasonable

expectations from them—and having suggested some things to prove the sin and folly of it—I shall close the discourse with some inferences and reflections for our improvement.

1. The things which have been said, lead us to reflect upon the poverty and wretchedness of those, who, in their hearts, depart from the living God; and place their expectations and trust in creatures, or any worldly object. “Thus saith the Lord, *Cursed* is the man that trusteth in man; and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” If we have no higher hopes than in worldly enjoyments—no better, more faithful, sufficient and permanent friend than man is—than creatures, “Whose breath is in their nostrils”—we are surely wretched, and subjects of the most melancholy poverty indeed. For nothing is satisfying—nothing is permanent below the sun. “All flesh is grass.” All creatures are feeble and frail. They are incapable of defending themselves either from the evils of life, or from death—or of lending aid sufficient to support one another in this world of evils and afflictions—or to prepare them for another world.

But what, in a dying hour, will it profit us to have had the whole world, with all its miserable enjoyments, if then our immortal souls have no friend who is able to stand by them? And what will avail the attempts of worldly friends to support and console? Alas! “Miserable comforters” will they all be. Surely, never did any shipwrecked, starving mariner, when driven about upon the fragments of his vessel, in the midst of a tempestuous ocean, need aid and refreshment more than we need a better friend, divine consolations, and a higher happiness, than this dying world can bestow. Hence,

2. We learn the inexpressible importance of real, personal religion, or a union of heart to Christ, the

friend of sinners—the friend that sticketh closer than a brother. If “all flesh is grass, and the fashion of this world passeth away”—if there is nothing here upon which we can rest—nothing which will support us amidst the changing scenes of life, and the gloomy hour of our departure from it—then, of what unutterable worth and importance are the friendship and favor of God—and that religion with which they are connected—a religion consisting in a holy conformity of the heart to the character of God and the gospel of his grace, and which is wrought and cherished in the soul by the efficient operations of the Holy Spirit. This, and *this only*, can place us in a right condition, with respect to all *present*, as well as future objects. It will furnish us with a preparedness to use the things of the world as not abusing them, and in their proper connection with eternity. It will support us under afflictions and trials. It will enable us to contemplate the approach of death, with serenity and inward peace. The divine Saviour, to all who trust in him, will be as an “hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest—he will be as rivers of water in a dry place—as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

3. From what has been said, we infer the importance of an *immediate attention to all relative duties*.

The Most High has, in his providence, placed us in such a condition, upon earth, that we stand in numerous and peculiar relations to each other. We stand in the relation of rulers and subjects, husbands and wives, parents and children, brethren and sisters, teachers and taught. To all these relations are attached peculiar and important duties, which are of reciprocal obligation. By neglecting any of these, whether through sloth or false kindness towards those with whom we stand connected—we *injure them*, and thus transgress the law of love. In so doing we shall likewise *injure ourselves*—as the errors and sinful

practices, into which they may fall, in consequence of our neglect of duty, will be against *us*. In this way we shall become partakers in other men's sins. The importance therefore of relative duties is *plain*. It will doubtless be generally granted. But the great danger is found in our proneness to neglect them *for the present*, and put them off to an *imagined* more convenient season.

Now our text and subject suggest an important reason for an *immediate* attention, viz. the *frailty* of all around us. The consideration, that they are *dying creatures*, having not a moment's lease of life, should engage us, if there are any duties, which we would wish to perform—whether of counsel, or clarity, or instruction, or example, or reproof—to set *immediately* about them, lest those, to whom they are due, should be suddenly taken from us, and our opportunities lost for ever.

Ministers should ever address their hearers with all that faithfulness and solemnity, which become dying men, when addressing sinners that must die—sinners, who, before another sabbath, may be summoned to the bar of God.

The same solemn impression ought to influence all, that are in common life. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, ought to view and treat each other, every day, with respect to the duties they owe them, as if it were *their last*. For indeed it may be the last. We are, at no time, sure, but that before another day or hour arrives, our connections may be taken from us, and their eyes fast closed in death.

Thus we have a strong inducement to the *immediate* discharge of relative duties, not only from *our* frailty, but from the frailty of *all around us*.

4. This truth, and all the solemn truths of our subject, are enforced by all the instances of mortality within our knowledge ; and more immediately by

several *recent* instances among both the aged and young. Suffer me to turn your thoughts to these, as striking examples to illustrate and enforce our subject. Surely they are such as ought to be seriously noticed and remembered by all.

The first I shall mention is that of an aged person, a dear sister in this church, who was lately called to go the way of all the earth. In the view of this, and under the impression of our subject, I would call upon the aged to notice the hand of providence, and hear the call in this instance of mortality among their companions in age. To them the solemn command is, in this providence, addressed, "Be ye also ready." With respect to the young, death may *possibly* be at the distance of years; but with respect to the aged it is certainly at hand. "It is even at the door."

The next instance I have to mention, and which more peculiarly coincides with the language of our subject, is that affecting instance of the uncertainty of human life—the death of a youth, a female, about fifteen years of age. Blooming in youth, amiable in disposition, surrounded with many promising prospects; she was, a few weeks since, in a very sudden and surprising manner, separated from her widowed parent—from her affectionate friends—from this house of worship, where, very lately, she was our mouth to God in the praise of his sanctuary, and from all sublunary things, into the vast world of spirits.

In the view of this event, I would call upon the youth, and especially upon those of the age and acquaintance of the deceased, to lay it seriously to heart, and keep in daily remembrance their own frailty.

But, perhaps, some of you are ready to tell me, "This is unseasonable. It is too late to address us. Our friend is gone. Over her grave we dropped a tear—and then engaged in the same thoughtless, and



vain pursuits as before. We wish not to have the gloomy subject of death revived." Alas! my dying friends, and is it so, as was suggested to some of you, at that affecting funeral scene, that in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, you would probably return to your former thoughtlessness respecting preparation for death? Have you already lost the solemn impression? Was that lesson of mortality—that lesson of the uncertainty and vanity of youthful prospects, which was then held up before your eyes, and written in such legible characters—was that lesson of wisdom so little attended to, as to be already effaced from your minds? Can you, in so few days, visit the circle where your companion lately appeared, and mingle in conversation, which has no respect to death and the eternal world? Can you rise in this house to address Jehovah, and sing his praise with a thoughtless tongue, and without so much as the reflection, that one, who, only a few days since, was numbered with you, and had as fair a prospect of life as any of you now have, has joined, either the wretched throng, who have neglected the gospel, or the happy heavenly choir, whose delightful praises will fill eternity?

I know not that any are so thoughtless—but if they are, if in so few days a providence so striking is forgotten, then it is proper—it is seasonable to recall it to your minds. But if my voice be not sufficient, I have the voice of God anew in his providence to join with it. For I have another death among your number to announce to you. Another youth, whose age was about fifteen years, in a like sudden and surprising manner, has, the week past, been snatched away by death. But two days since, she was laid low in the grave.

These events are loud calls to the youth of my charge. I cannot let them pass unnoticed. My opportunities of addressing the deceased are no more.



But to the living I have opportunities to speak. Shall I let them pass unimproved?

My youthful hearers, it is a very serious and affecting consideration, that you are so constantly exposed to the stroke of death, and are nevertheless so generally thoughtless. Yet be intreated to receive the admonitions of unchanging truth. Amidst the gaiety and giddiness of youth, remember, your life is a vapor, and will soon vanish. God will assuredly bring you into judgment. Your presumption upon long life, and consequently on the safety of at present neglecting religion, is a presumption against every dictate of wisdom.

How long, my young friends, shall the voice of God call after you in vain? Dare you resolve, that you will not be religious—that you will never return unto the Lord, your Creator and Judge? Remember, it is unchangeably appointed unto you once to die—and that the hour will, at furthest, soon arrive, in which you *must*, “Go the way of all the earth.” For myself, I know, that I shall be called to give my account, whether I have been faithful to your souls. I call you to record, this day, that, if you die eternally, I am clear from your blood.

Before I conclude, suffer me to express a most earnest desire, that those, who are parents, would lay these events to heart. They reiterate the remonstrance of eternal truth, “Cease ye from man.” Perhaps you have children growing up before your eyes. Perhaps they are ingenious, amiable, promising. Upon them, perhaps, you are already leaning, and hoping from them to receive needed support—much satisfaction—many joys. But, “Cease ye from man.” Your children are frail. Their breath is in their nostrils. Wherein is their life to be accounted of? But while you cease from trusting in them, and from setting your affections inordinately upon them, yet cease not from their instruction. Remember, they are constantly liable to be taken

from you. Remember, you *must* meet them at the bar of God. How awful—how tremendous *that* meeting, if you shall there be found to have been accessory to their destruction, either by your neglect, or pernicious example, or both. May it please God to give you grace to discharge this and every relative duty! Of him may you receive a heart to attend unto his voice, addressing you in his word and providence; and may you and yours have grace to walk in his paths, that lead unto life! Amen.



---

## S E R M O N XIV.

YOUTH REMINDED OF JUDGMENT.

---

### ECCLESIASTES XI. 9.

*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.*

**T**HE inspired author of this passage has, in his writings, paid great attention to youth. He has given them "line upon line, and precept upon precept." He wrote much to warn them of the dangers to which they are peculiarly exposed, to instruct them in particular and appropriate duties, and to lead them forward in general piety. In doing this, he at once supported the character of a wise man, and a benevolent parent.

It is observable, that youth is the proper age of discipline, and that consequences most important to the happiness of the young, in time and in eternity, depend upon a wise and faithful improvement of it. This season in life affords the most favorable oppor-

tunity to lay a foundation for useful human knowledge, and especially is it the best time to lay a safe foundation for eternal felicity. But alas ! the young are not apt to set a just estimate upon it, nor to judge rightly in respect to the manner in which it may safely and lawfully be spent. They consider not, that *the chief end of man is to glorify God*. And that they ought in all things, and at every period in life, to keep this end in view. The morning of life is frequently devoted to vain and sinful gratifications. Seriousness is put off to a time of sickness or old age, or the known approach of death.

In support of the vanity and mirth of youth, some have the confidence to quote even the word of God. They insist, that agreeable to the scriptures, "There is a time for all things." That youth is a proper time for gaiety and worldly amusements. They appeal for justification to the words of the text, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." These are indeed the words of Solomon, and words of divine inspiration ; but how easy is it, for the vain and sensual, to give them a wrong construction. Was there nothing in reason, and was there nothing in other parts of the scriptures inconsistent with a literal construction of such passages, they would doubtless be very pleasing words to youth in general. Would they not, my hearers, be pleasing to some of you ? Were you assured that there is no heaven, nor hell ; no final judgment, nor solemn retribution, would it not give you great satisfaction ? Were you convinced of this, would you not sin without remorse or concern ? If so, you must be convinced that you are wholly unprepared to come to judgment. Yet, that God will judge the world in righteousness, there can be no rational doubt. Reason, or the light of nature, affords probable evidence of it ; the fitness of things evidently requires it ; and God himself hath solemnly an-

nounced it in his word. He hath announced it in the last clause of the text ;—a solemn clause, which must by no means be kept back, but ever be held up in connection with the preceding words, in which some pretend that great indulgence is allowed: “Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

In further discoursing from the text, it is proposed to enquire,

I. What it is for youth to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes.

II. How Solomon is to be understood when calling upon youth in the text, thus to walk.

III. To consider the import of this solemn warning, “Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”

I. It is proposed to enquire, what it is for youth to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes.

To this I reply,

That for youth to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, is for them to pursue those objects, and indulge those inclinations, which are natural to young people: To follow the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. We are taught by experience and observation, that the young are inclined to be independent, heedless, and vain. In all matters relating to gaiety and amusement, they choose to be their own judges, and to act according to their own views and feelings; without paying a suitable regard to the advice, counsels, or admonitions of others, even if they are given by their best and ablest friends.



It follows that the ways of their heart, and the sight of their eyes are sinful. This is the way of all while in their natural state. The courses, and indeed all the doings of the unregenerate are wholly sinful. The scriptures teach, that the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil—that madness is in their hearts while they live—that they are all gone out of the way, and are together become unprofitable—that there is none that doeth good, no, not one—that every imagination of their hearts is only evil, and that continually. In respect to children and youth—that they are born in sin and shapen in iniquity—that folly is bound up in their hearts in childhood—and in opposition to the being born of the spirit, our Saviour asserted—“that which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

Those therefore who walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, will walk in the ways of this world ; will yield a conformity to its views and its vanities, following and helping on a multitude to do evil. They will treat the vanities of this world as the one thing needful, to the neglect of their souls and eternal concerns. They will make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof ; will riot on the bounties of providence by spending them in sin ; will cast off fear and restrain prayer, and spend their time, not excepting even their sabbaths, and other seasons which ought to be especially devoted to the service and worship of God, in slavish servitude to sin and Satan. That they will do this is evident from the consideration, that the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and wholly inclined to it.

That the construction now given to the words of the text is just, will appear by considering what is intended by similar expressions found in the word of God. Two or three will here be introduced for illustration: Psalm lxxxi. 12. “ So I gave them up unto *their own* heart’s lusts, and they walked in *their own* counsels. Oh, that my people had hearkened

unto me, and Israel had walked in *my ways*." In Jeremiah xviii. God is represented as calling upon the people to walk in *his way*; but they said, verse 12, "We will walk after *our own* devices, and we will every one do the imagination of *his evil heart*." 1 John ii. 15, 16. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." From the evident meaning of these and similar passages, and from their strong resemblance to the words of the text, it is clear that the construction which has been given to it, is agreeable to the intention of the inspired writer.

This then is the direction that is literally given to youth in the text. Indulge in carnal joys and mirth, cast off all seriousness, all attention to religion and care of the soul, follow the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and every suggestion and corrupt inclination of your will and depraved hearts.

This leads us to enquire,

II. How Solomon is to be understood, when calling upon youth to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes.

To this it may be replied; that the wise man did, without any doubt, wholly and very strongly disapprove of the practice to which the words literally direct. The text is evidently expressed ironically, and to be understood in a sense, directly opposite to the literal construction. Solomon is not here describing the way in which youth ought to walk; but the way in which they are disposed to walk, and points out the dreadful consequences.

The text begins, indeed, in the form of a positive command, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," &c. And it is not unfrequent in common speech,

that a reproof or prohibition is given in a like form ; nor is the text the only solitary instance of this mode of expression in the word of God. A solemn warning is given in the form of a command. Isaiah l. 11. Addressing those who kindle a fire and compass themselves about with sparks, or those who reject the light which God hath given, and seek comfort, safety and the divine favor by their own inventions, God says, " Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled." Notwithstanding this expression is in the form of a command, the threatening annexed teaches us, that the expression is intended as a serious admonition : " This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

In this way the text is to be understood. It is a threatening of judgment, even of final and endless condemnation to those who shall continue to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes. I will here subjoin the words of one who paraphrases upon the words under consideration : " Poor thoughtless creatures, who, in the giddy intoxication of youth, are madly bent upon sensual gratifications and sinful pleasures, take your fill and withhold not your hearts from any joy. Follow every vicious inclination, break through every restraint of reason and of piety, trample on the admonitions of parents and teachers, shake off the fetters of a strict education, and burst the bonds of religion, like threads of flax when they are touched by the flames. But consider well the consequences ! Think not that you shall always thus go on insulting the God of heaven with impunity ; but know and be assured, that as you have your day, God also will have his ; a day of strict account, and solemn retribution.

" Know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment ; and unless you can find out an expedient to conceal you from an all-seeing eye, or defend you from an omnipotent hand, a deluge of

wrath will surely bear you away to everlasting destruction."

This appears to be the true import of the text. Yet there have been, and perhaps now are some, who are unwilling to admit this construction. They may pretend that the text was designed to give permission and even encouragement to youth, to indulge their taste for pleasures, and spend the morning of life in gaiety and mirth. In support of this they adduce the words immediately following the text: "Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity." But because childhood and youth are vanity, is it reasonable to suppose that this destroys the obligation of the young to serve God, and lead a sober and religious life? Besides, doth not the same wise man exhort youth, in the very next words, to remember their Creator in the days of their youth? He does not exhort them to spend the bloom of life in the service of sin and in vain amusements; nor to employ their most active days in the pursuit of sensual gratifications; but to spend the morning of life in the service of God. The apostle Paul, in his charge to Titus, enjoined it upon him to exhort youth to be sober minded, to lead a life of sobriety and religion. Must we therefore set the wise Solomon against himself, and against the apostle Paul? As a different construction may easily be given, so a different construction in this place evidently must be given.

Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, by removing and putting away the procuring cause of them. Suppress every sensual and disorderly lust. Walk not in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; for should these things at present gratify the senses and vain minds of youth, yet they will shortly and certainly bring them to inconceivable and eternal sorrow. Youth are exhorted to put away sorrow and

evil from themselves, by refraining from those practices which would inevitably bring those evils upon them.

It is added, for childhood and youth are vanity. Which words may refer to their *disposition*, for such is the vanity of their disposition, their hearts are fixed upon vain objects and pursuits. The things which they eagerly seek are light and trivial. Such is the temper of their minds, their hearts are inconstant, false, and deceitful; they are full of lightness and inconsideration, and hence they become exposed to many and great evils.

Or the words may intend, that childhood and youth are vanity in respect to their *condition*. If the life of man is a vapor, much more is the season of youth; they may be cut off in the midst of youth by death, and if not, their advantages are transitory and uncertain. Evil days are constantly threatening, and old age or death will soon come. Therefore it is added in the very next words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." To remember our Creator, with that fear and reverence required, is directly opposed to the idea that youth may safely walk in the ways of their heart, and sight of their eyes.

From these considerations it appears, that the words of the text were not designed as a description of the way in which youth ought to walk, but of that in which they are prone to walk. That the text describes the way in which they are disposed to go, is evident from experience and common observation, as well as from scripture. It is evident to all, that youth in general are disposed to rejoice in vain amusements, and sinful pleasures. They choose to walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, and to be their own judges what courses to pursue. They are very prone to neglect, and often despise



the warnings and admonitions of parents and friends, and the solemn threatenings of the word of God. They are pleased with the first part of the text, and would wish to understand it literally ; but are displeased with the conclusion. It speaks unpleasant things to them : “ Go on as you please, give a loose to your passions and desires, walk as your heart and eyes direct, sport away the bloom of life in folly’s idle whirl ; but remember that you must shortly answer it at the judgment seat of Christ.” Death is near and inevitable, and a life spent in vanity and folly and sinful pleasure will certainly be connected with final destruction.

It is unnecessary to enlarge ; enough has been said to evince that in the words of the text, the wise man did not mean to encourage youth to go on in the ways of their heart, and sight of their eyes ; but that it was his design to point out the way in which youth are naturally inclined to go, and to warn them of the tendency of these ways, and the destruction to which they lead.

It remains now in the

III. Place, to attend a little to the solemn dissuasives in the text, or to the import of the warning, “ Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” And

1. The words imply and teach us, that God is the constant spectator of all the conduct of youth at all times, and indeed of the conduct of all mankind. “ For all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.” The words imply that he knows and sees them all ; as it is elsewhere declared, “ the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” God will not, like worldly judges, need to have recourse to witnesses, to inform him of our conduct. He is not, and cannot be far from every one of us ; for it is in him that we live and move and



have our being. We cannot possibly be concealed from his eye. When men sin against their fellow creatures, they may perhaps succeed in their endeavors to deceive them, and conceal their own wickedness; but from God they cannot conceal a thought. To attempt it would be madness. This should have influence upon sinners, and render them afraid to indulge in sin, or walk in the ways of their hearts.

2. The words very emphatically express the certainty of a future judgment, and that sinners cannot escape it.

This is a doctrine abundantly taught in scripture; but the emphasis with which God declares it to sinners in the text is peculiar: "Know thou"—"that God will bring thee into judgment." It is not said, expect or believe; but "know thou." Thou, O sinner, whosoever thou art, there will not only be a judgment, but every sinner must appear—not one can escape. God will bring *thee* into judgment. In vain will sinners attempt to conceal themselves. In vain will they excuse or dispute an attendance, for *God will bring them*. His hand will be upon them, and it will be infinitely too strong for their feeble resistance.

3. The solemn warning in the text implies, that the judgment threatened will be dreadful, and that it will be particular and final.

For *all these things*, God will bring thee into judgment. No action, purpose, or thought, will be forgotten or omitted. Every work and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, shall be brought up to view. Thousands and thousands of sins, which are forgotten by the sinner, and which will probably be forgotten until that day, will then be brought up and set in order, in awful order before his eyes.

The doom will also be *final*. There is no appeal—no deliverance to those who are found impenitent. There is but *one sentence* for those on the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” This is the result of the judgment of God, with respect to all who continue to walk in the ways of their heart and in the sight of their eyes. This is the portion of the wicked, the heritage appointed him of God.

Such are some of the important dissuasives contained in the solemn warning in the text, and addressed to all, especially to those youth, who walk in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes: “Know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.”

In review of this subject, let the youth who hear me, be exhorted to enquire into the state of their hearts, and the course of their lives. Let them suffer conscience to speak, and hearken to its voice. Should any find that they are of the number of those who walk, and are still disposed to walk, in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, let them hear the divine admonition, for to them it is addressed: “Rejoice O young man,” woman, or child, rejoice and “let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.” Remember that God is a spectator of all your conduct, he knows all your thoughts, and hard speeches against him, and against his cause and people. The Lord hearkens and hears. A book of remembrance is written for you, as well as for those who fear him and think upon him. Remember that God will bring you into judgment, and set your sins in dreadful array before you, and that if impenitent and without an interest in Christ, your doom will be that of those who have trampled on the blood of the Son of God. A doom which you cannot escape, and yet a

doom which you cannot endure ; and being unable to escape it, and unable to endure it, you must sink under it for ever.

Act not, my hearers, so unwise a part as to endeavour to elude conviction, lest you flatter yourselves that there is no sin, no moral evil in walking in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes : Or that there will be no judgment : Or that God observes you not, or will not be strict to mark you. Do not act so irrational a part as to run the dreadful risk, against the dictates of reason, conscience, and revelation. If you should finally loose your immortal souls, and that after so many calls and warnings, what would the world, with all its pleasures and enjoyments profit you ? Or what could you give in exchange for your souls.

---

S E R M O N X V.

OUR TIMES IN GOD'S HAND.

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON,

*Delivered Jan. 6, 1805.*

---

PSALM XXXI. 15.

*My times are in thy hand.*

**T**HESE words are an exclamation of pious David. They were spoken in the review of past deliverances, and the contemplation of present and future dangers and trials. Looking back over the past scenes of his life, considering the dangers and enemies he had encountered, and the deliverances he had experienced, and contemplating all the way in which he had been led, he could ascribe it to nothing but the constant watchfulness, and the interposing hand of God, that he was still preserved, and that his enemies had not triumphed in his death. In this review, he found great occasion to rejoice, that his times had not been in the hands of his enemies, nor yet in his own, but in the hands of God; and he was filled with emotions of gratitude to his preserv-

er. Therefore he said, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, thou hast considered my trouble, thou hast known my soul in adversity, and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy."

At the time that David wrote this Psalm, he was in present trouble, and the prospects before him were gloomy. This, probably, was the occasion of his writing it, and of his breaking out at the beginning of it, in earnest petitions for divine interposition in his behalf. And that he might encourage himself in God, amidst the dangers which threatened him, he took the review, just mentioned, of his past experience of divine favor. What these dangers were, we are not particularly informed; but it appears from the context, that his enemies were bent on his destruction—that they had laid a net privily for him—that they had taken counsel together against him, and devised mischief—that they had slandered him, and that with lying lips they had spoken grievous things proudly and contemptuously against him, and against the saints, who were his friends. But in view of these things, and uncertain with respect to their issue, he consoled himself, by the consideration, that his bitterest foes could do nothing against him, without the divine permission—that if it was for the best interests of his kingdom and glory, God would protect him from them, and deliver him from his fears, as he had often done already; but if not, still he desired to be in his hand. This he expressed when he fled before Absalom, who had insidiously alienated the hearts of his people from him, and usurped the government, saying to Zadock, "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." This is the temper expressed in the text. In view of all the dangers which he saw before him, the uncertainty of

his life, or of the condition and circumstances in which he might be placed, he could say with submission and satisfaction, "My times are in thy hand."

How happy, my brethren, should we be, if we could truly adopt his language ! How happy, if at this time, in review of past experience, and while uncertain of the things which may be before us, we could say, with an humble trust in God, and cordial submission, "*Our times are in thy hand.*"

In discoursing upon this subject, I shall,

I. Make a few observations on the word *times*, as used in the text. And then proceed to show,

II. That our *times* are all in God's hand: And,

III. That it is our duty, and would be our happiness, to live always under the due influence of the consideration, that our times are all in God's hand.

I. I am to make a few observations on the word *times*, as used in our text.

This word, as here used by the Psalmist, had reference, not merely to the duration of his mortal life, (though this was included,) but to all the events and circumstances of it. You will find, by observation, that the word *time* is often used in the scriptures for things done, or circumstances taking place in time. We have an instance of this, 1Chron. xxix. 30. "With all his reign [David's] and his might, and the *times* which went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." These, it is said in the preceding verse, were written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer. But by the *times* that went over David, which were written in those books, are evidently meant the events of the times, or the changes which befel them, his persecutions, and manifold troubles, and his great successes and



achievements. The word *days* is also used in a similar manner, Psalm xxxvii. 18. "The Lord knoweth the *days* of the upright. i. e. (says Mr. Poole, in his annotation on the passage) their condition, and all things which do or may befall them, their dangers and fears, and sufferings from ungodly men ; and therefore will watch over, and preserve them : days, or years, or times, being often put for things done, or events happening in them."

That in the text the Psalmist had not reference merely to the time of his death, is evident from his using the word in the plural : " My *times* are in thy hand." He knew not what times—what events were before him ; but he rejoiced that they were all in the hand of God. He used the term without limitation. By our *times* therefore is to be understood, not only the time of our death, but our times of sickness, of health, of usefulness, of sorrow, or of comfort, and of all kinds of prosperity, or adversity. I proceed to show,

II. That our times are all in God's hand—that, in this extensive sense, our times are all at his disposal, and take place according to his direction.

1. Our times are certainly not in our own hands, or at our own disposal. Who, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature, or one moment to his life, when called by the messenger of death ? " There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death : and there is no discharge in that war." We cannot command life, health, riches, honors, pleasures, promotion, or any of the things and circumstances of our lives. Nor do men succeed in seeking temporal enjoyments, in proportion to their wisdom, strength, and skill. In respect to these things, " The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of un-

derstanding, nor yet favor to men of skill." Men may boast themselves of their health, their skill, their treasures, and various prosperity ; but a few years—and perhaps a few days or hours, may show that their times are not in their own hands, and that all such boastings are vain.

2. It is equally certain, that our times are not in the hands of our enemies. This was the consolation of the Psalmist, and may be our consolation. They have no power by which they can injure us, independently of the special permission of God. Their exertions to do this may be, and often are, turned to our advantage : "The wise are taken in their own craftiness."

Nor yet are our times, in any respect, in the hands of *chance*. Many speak of *chance*, *luck*, or *fortune*, as if it were a kind of deity, which regulates our times, and dispenses good or evil, as the heathens accounted it a goddess. But there is no such thing as chance, any more in respect to these things, than in creating the world. All our times are in God's hand, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death—all are disposed and directed by him. This is taught by our own reason ; for if there be a God, his providence must extend to all things.

This truth is also plainly supported, by the holy scriptures. It is taught, not only in our text, but also in the declaration of the apostle : " In him we live and move and have our being ;" and especially in the words of Christ, speaking to his disciples, on this very subject : " Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings ? and not one of them is forgotten before God ; but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." It is added, " Ye are of more value than many sparrows." The argument is from the less to the greater. If God notices the circumstances of sparrows, much more will he notice ours. If their

times are all in his hands, doubtless ours are also. It remains to show,

III. That it is our duty, and would be our happiness, to live always under the due influence of the consideration, that our times are all in God's hand.

Here it may be proper to consider, what the genuine influence of this truth would be on our lives, or what is the course of conduct which it requires.

1. Since our times are in God's hand, not only with respect to all the circumstances of our lives, but the period of them ; and since they are not at all in our own hands, or at our own control, we ought to live as dying creatures—to improve present time, doing with our might, whatsoever our hand findeth to do, not boasting of to-morrow, or presuming on any future time.

There are various ways, in which men may practically boast of future time, and thus virtually deny that their times are in God's hand, by not living under the due influence of the truth contained in our text.

This is done by all, who indulge themselves in the practice of any sin, of which they intend hereafter to repent. And this is perhaps the case with most persons, who live in any known sins. Those who practise dishonesty, falsehood, oppression, revenge, prophane swearing, and blasphemy, and similar gross vices, know that they have no excuse, and that without repentance, they must perish. Their continuing in them, therefore, is virtually saying, that they have future time at their control.

The same may be said of those, who neglect any known duty, deferring it for some future opportunity. Parents do this, when they neglect the duties, which they owe their children. It is highly incumbent on them, daily to pray with their children, and for them—to instruct them by precept and example, and to inculcate upon them the great things, which belong

to their peace. Many parents acknowledge this to be their duty, and that it is of infinite importance that it should be faithfully discharged, but find in themselves much disinclination to it, and many difficulties in the way, and therefore, in the hope that difficulties will be less hereafter, they defer it for a future opportunity: thus by presuming on life, they practically deny that their times are in God's hand. The reverse of all these things is the line of conduct, which arises from the due influence of the truth, that our times are in the hands of God.

2. Since our times are in God's hand, we ought to acknowledge it in our conversation, and whole deportment, and by the manner in which we undertake our secular business; and especially by the method in which we speak of any past providences, or future worldly prospects and enjoyments. This acknowledgment, made by a conformity of life and conversation, will be the effect of the genuine influence, the cordial belief, and impressive sense of this truth. Under this influence, we shall notice the hand of God in all things, and speak with reverence of divine providence. In support of this we have the example of the most eminent saints.

Caleb, that eminent Israelite, of whom it was testified, that he followed the Lord fully, speaking of the past scenes of his life, thus expressed himself, "And now behold, the *Lord* hath kept me alive." The patriarch Jacob said, "God, who hath fed me all my life long to this day, and redeemed me from all evil." And the apostle, "*Having obtained help,* I continue to this day." The Psalmist also, in the words of our text, "My times are in thy hand." Such are the examples set before us, of a serious and devout manner of speaking, both with respect to past providences, and future events, for which we are dependent upon God; and they are worthy of our imitation.

Since our times are in God's hand, it must be sinful to boast of to morrow, and wrong to express ourselves, in any such way as may intimate, that we are forgetful of this truth ; or that we undertake any business, without first seeking God's blessing, and relying upon his assistance. Hence the reproof and advice of the apostle James : " Go to now, ye that say to day, or to morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life ? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, *If the Lord will*, we shall live and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil."

To how many persons might this reproof apply at the present day ? How common are the instances of similar boasting ; and how apt are even professing Christians, to fall into it, or at least, use a language similar to it ? All such the apostle reproves, as acting a part dishonorable to God, and inconsistent with that acknowledging of him in all our ways, and that abiding sense of our absolute dependence, which he requires

3. If our times are in God's hand, and we have a realizing, impressive sense, and love of this truth, we shall not hesitate to perform any duty, through fear of man. This truth requires, and the love of it will influence us to pursue the course of our duty, whatever dangers may be in the way, or whatever evils may be threatened as the consequence. In a believing view of this truth, and in a sense of the divine power and presence, the way of duty would be considered the way of safety, though the greatest evils were threatened, and though there was a prospect even of persecution and death. He in whose hand all our times are, cannot be disappointed in any of his designs. He can keep us from evil, amidst



threatening dangers, as well as in apparent safety. And to seek to avert the trials, which he designs to bring upon us, by deserting the post of duty, is but provoking him to show us, by sad experience, that none can with impunity mock God, or contend with the Almighty and prosper.

4. If we feel that our times are in God's hand—at his perfect and all-wise disposal, it will tend to inspire us with patience and resignation under evils, and to dispose us to wait God's time and pleasure for deliverance. Eyeing the hand of God in our circumstances, we shall perceive it to be in vain, and sinful to murmur, or to use any unlawful measures to liberate ourselves from sufferings; but shall say with Job, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Hence we find the Psalmist, impressed with the truth which he had uttered in the text, and having experienced that God is good to them that wait for him, closing the Psalm with exhortations to faithfulness and patience, saying, "O love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful—be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

5. A cordial belief, and a realizing sense, that our times are in God's hands, would be matter of joy and consolation to us, in view of the darkest and most gloomy prospects, which may at any time appear, respecting ourselves, our children, our friends, the church of God, or the land and the world. In a humble, faithful performance of duty, we may leave all with God. All events are at his disposal, and he will take care of his own cause, and be the portion of all who rejoice that their times are in his hand. This is the great secret of the Christian's comfort and joy. They know that the saints, and their



works, are in the hands of God ; they know that the Lord reigneth, and will do all his pleasure.

The question is put, "If the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" And the answer is made, "The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord's throne is in the heavens ; his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men."—"O how great is thy goodness, (says the Psalmist in our context,) which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men? Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of men ; thou shalt keep them secretly, in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues."

Thus I have shown, in several particulars, what course of conduct is required of those, who admit that their times are in God's hand, and what would be the tendency, and happy effects of this truth upon mankind, if cordially received. From these considerations it is sufficiently evident, that it is our duty, and would be our happiness, to live always under its due influence.

And now, having this truth, and the general use to be made of it before us, let us apply it to our particular circumstances, and make use of it, to excite us to gratitude, and an humble trust in God, and submission to him at all times. Let us look back upon the past, and consider the times that have gone over us, and rejoice, that for the future, our times are in God's hand.

We stand at the close of one year, and the commencement of another. A year—the largest part of time, by which dying men measure out the short and uncertain period of the existence allotted them, in the present probationary state. Let us look back upon the past year, and briefly review our whole lives, remembering all the way which God hath led us, and noticing the evidence that our times have been in God's hand.

Let us look back upon our earliest years, and think of the divine goodness and care. When helpless, and unable to provide for ourselves, the tender hand of our heavenly parent conducted and guarded us, amidst surrounding dangers. Little do we know, at that heedless, unthinking period of life, through what numberless perils we pass, and how much we are indebted to the care of an unseen hand, which is constantly employed in preserving and upholding us. In reflecting on the years of infancy and childhood, in which so many fall by death, the preserved pious soul will feelingly adopt the words of the text, and say in the review, surely "My times are in thy hand."

Let us also observe the dealings of providence towards us, in every succeeding period of our lives. Let us reflect on the hand that conducted us through the slippery path of youth, when surrounded with so many snares and temptations, and which upheld us in life, while others, our companions, fell at our right hand, and our left.

Let us reflect with what wisdom and kindness God has fixed our lot in the world, having determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitations. How often in kindness, he has disappointed our expectations, and crossed our wishes, when the gratification of them would have been detrimental. And on the other hand, he has often surprised us with unexpected and unmerited mercies. Each for himself, in looking back on his past life, will see numerous scenes, in which an unseen hand directed wisely, when every thing at the time appeared dark and gloomy.

But not only temporal blessings, but religious privileges, and spiritual enjoyments, are to be noticed. Born in a land of Christian instruction, we have enjoyed from our earliest years, the means of grace. Like Timothy, we have known from our

childhood the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. We have had the word of God in our hands, and have enjoyed the privilege of his institutions—of public worship and divine ordinances. These favors we continue to enjoy, and remain prisoners of hope, while many have fallen;—younger than we have fallen into the grave—fallen into endless woe. What shall we render unto God for all his benefits? Let us rejoice that our times are in his hand, and devote our lives to his service. And let those, who have been made the subjects of his saving grace, adore his distinguishing mercy.

But let us, for a moment, consider the times that have gone over us, in the year past. The times which have gone over the state, and nation, and all the nations of the earth, in the year past, have been interesting, and calculated to teach us lessons of wisdom, the same lessons which the word of God has always taught us; that mankind will never be harmonious and happy, till they are made better; and that a free and happy government never will be long supported, without the spread and influence of Christianity, nor unless it is encouraged by government, and supported in all proper ways, by the example and exertions of the legislature.

But the times, to which we are particularly to attend, are those, which have passed over us as a congregation, and as individuals. We have had times of mercy and times of affliction, but they have all been in God's hand. It becomes us to notice our escapes from death, and to look upon the scenes of mortality in our families, or the families of our neighbors. The deaths among us, in the year past, have been fewer, than the average number for many years. We have enjoyed general health. No dreadful epidemic has prevailed, except in a few families, and the subjects of it in those families,

have been wonderfully raised, by a merciful providence. Yet death hath silently, and in several instances suddenly, cut down one after another, till the number of deaths has amounted to *twenty-one*. Seven or eight of these were females, the others males. The number twenty-one, however, includes an instance of a foreigner and stranger, who was poor, and was supported at the expense of the state. Only twenty of the inhabitants of this town have died. Of these, five were under the age of four months; one aged eleven years; two died in youth, having entered the marriage state; they had become parents, and were called away from their dear companions, and their tender babes, at the age of twenty-one, and twenty-five years; four died between thirty-nine and fifty-eight, three of whom left young families to bewail their loss; and eight were taken from among the aged, from between sixty-three and eighty-three—a larger proportion of the aged than what is usual.

These our deceased friends, and other friends, who died in other places, are gone: we have bid them farewell, we shall see them no more here. Their weeping families shall enjoy their smiles, and their assistance no more on earth. But their times were in God's hand. The times and circumstances of their deaths were ordered in wisdom, and some of them, in great mercy to themselves, and to the living. Let us remember, that we must soon follow, and let us take heed that we live as dying creatures, who must soon render a solemn and interesting account of ourselves to God, and must for ever abide the sentence, which will be given, according to the deeds done here in the body. Let us reflect, that we have one year less to live, and one more, with all its times, its sabbaths, means and advantages, trials and comforts, shortly to account for unto God: solemn thought! worthy to make a serious impression on our minds, and suitable to awaken the reflection, what have we laid up the last year against the judgment?

Perhaps before the present year is closed, we shall finish our state of trial for eternity—yea doubtless some of us, and perhaps numbers of us, will be called from this world, and all its concerns, to appear before God : not only in old age, and in middle life, but numbers also in youth, and childhood, according to the ordinary course of providence, will die, and all further opportunities to prepare for the day of judgment, and eternal retributions, will be precluded. And are you all prepared ?

Are you ready and prepared, my aged friends, to go—to die this year—to go to the judgment seat of Christ ? You have long enjoyed the means of grace, have been favored, through the forbearance and tender mercies of God, with many precious opportunities to secure salvation ; you have had much longer time, than the most of mankind have, to prepare for the world of glory ; you have had time enough to deliberate on the importance and wisdom, of laying up in store a good foundation, against the time to come, that you might take hold on eternal life. And are you now prepared ?

Are you, who are parents, prepared to die this year. Have you fulfilled the duties you owe your families ? have you instructed them, counselled them, prayed for them, and with them, and have you been true to him, who intrusted them to your care, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ? Have you neglected nothing towards them, the neglect of which would afflict you on a dying bed ? Your lives are uncertain. Whatever you would do for the everlasting welfare of your families, should be done without delay ; and your duties as parents, are great, and of great importance to your children. Oh, then, set your houses in order, for you must die, and not live. If it be uncertain, whether this shall take place before the close of the present year, this uncertainty should lead you to admit no



delay ; and since it must come, it is wise to be always prepared.

Are you, my young friends—the youth and children—are you prepared and ready to leave this world, and appear before your judge ? Oh, how important it is, that you remember your Creator in the days of your youth ; and that you seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Our Lord invites you in particular to come unto him, and declares his readiness to receive those who are very young. How affectionate are his words : “ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”

Finally, my hearers, let us all be exhorted to make our peace with God, to take his word for our guide, and counsel, and our heritage for ever. In this way only can we find peace, and be supported, among the changing scenes of life. In this course, and acquiescing in the truth, that all our times are in God's hand, we may pass serenely along, amidst enenies and dangers, and wait all the days of our appointed time, till our change come. While we thus trust in God, and faithfully discharge our duty, we may leave our children, or our families, we may leave the church, and the world, with God. Though dark scenes draw over the land and the world, yet our times, and the times of our children, of the land, and of Zion, are in the hands of God. In this we may rejoice, for he will do all things well. He has been the God of our fathers, and if we will trust our times in his hand, he will be our God, and the God of our children ; for he is the dwelling place of his people in all generations. He is a prayer-hearing God ; he hath delivered those, who trusted in him, and he will still deliver them. Let us leave ourselves in his hand, and commit all our desires for



the good of others unto him in prayer, and with confidence in his wisdom and goodness.

This God is the God we adore,  
Our faithful unchangeable friend,  
Whose love is as large as his power,  
He neither knows measure nor end.

Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
Whose spirit shall guide us safe home :  
We'll praise him for all that is past,  
And trust him for all that's to come.

---

## S E R M O N XVI.

PSALMODY A PART OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

### A SINGING LECTURE.

---

#### PSALM LVII. 8.

*Awake up, my glory ; awake psaltery and harp : I  
myself will awake early.*

**T**HESE words contain an exclamation of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. He calls upon his tongue, “the *glory* of his frame,” to express the praises of his God, in the devout exercise of sacred song. He summons the instruments of art to aid his voice in this heavenly employment ; and resolves he will himself awake to the duty, in all the powers of his soul.

Conscious that his reason, his faculty of speech, and his musical powers, were the gifts of his Creator, he resolved to consecrate them all to his service, and by every possible method, use them as helps in the worship and praise of their author. Warmed with this sentiment, in a rhapsody of devotion, he exclaims, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fix-

ed, I will *sing*, and give praise. Awake up, my glory, awake psaltery and harp : I myself will awake early."

By the words of the text, the following truth is naturally suggested to our minds, viz. that, *We ought to consecrate all our powers and faculties to the service and worship of God.*

We are the creatures of God. He formed us by his word, and we are *fearfully* and *wonderfully* made. He has endowed us with rational powers. By these we are distinguished from the brutal creation, and rendered capable of the knowledge, service, and enjoyment of God. These powers, therefore, ought to be improved to obtain the knowledge of his character and kingdom—to assist us in his service and worship, and prepare us for the enjoyment of his holy presence.

He has also, endowed us with the faculty of speech, which, next to reason, is the distinguishing excellency and glory of man. By this we are capable of a mutual communication of our thoughts, of improving our rational powers, and assisting each other in the acquirement of useful knowledge. By this, too, we reciprocate sentiments and feelings—increase our social comforts, and unite in the social worship of the Father of our spirits. This faculty we ought also to devote to the service of God, in the uses for which it was given. We should "let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt—and let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying. Nether filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient ; but rather giving of thanks."

In addition to the faculty of speech, our beneficent Creator hath endowed us with musical powers and faculties. By these we are capable, not only of uttering the seven distinct original sounds of nature ; but, by the direction of the ear, and a musical taste,

of modulating them in strains of melody, and of combining the concording sounds, by several voices in concert, so as to constitute *harmony*. This, especially when accompanied with important sentiment, affects the mind, through the organ of hearing, and the sympathy of the nervous system, with the most refined and exquisitely pleasing sensations. We are indeed *wonderfully made*; and this faculty, by which we are capable of giving and receiving such sensations of delight, and of increasing the influence of sentiment, by the power of music, is not the smallest wonder in our formation. To whom, then, if not to the author of it, shall we consecrate this faculty? Should we not always use it with a view to his glory, while deriving from it all that assistance it is capable of giving in the worship of God? These are the ends for which it was given, and we ought not to pervert it from them. We have no right to consecrate it to Satan, by abusing it to vain and carnal purposes. To this practice, however, many are inclined. The use which multitudes make of music, and the highest end they propose from the practice and enjoyment of it, is to excite carnal mirth. By merry and vain songs, they endeavor to give a keener relish to scenes of conviviality—to beguile the insipidity of mispent time, and the more effectually banish from their minds the thoughts of a holy God. In reference to such abuses of music, and in reproof of them, the prophet Isaiah says, “The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wine are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.” And the prophet Amos, “They chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves, instruments of music like David—that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointment, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph,” or, the people of God. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Ephesian converts, says, “Be not

drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." As if he had said, instead of being filled with wine, as the heathen are in their festivals, be filled with the Spirit of God; and sing, not as they do, vain and impure songs but such as are spiritual: and instead of addressing your devotion to Bacchus, or Venus, or any other imaginary object of worship, always address it to the Lord of nature, and the giver of all things, "*singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*"

From these scripture passages, as well as from reason, it appears unfit, that music should be used for selfish, carnal, and sensual purposes; and that it ought to be improved, like all other enjoyments, either with an immediate, or ultimate reference to the service of God. It may be used lawfully, and in the service of God, at other times, and in other ways, than the direct worship of God. We may use it, either to relax the mind from cares, or to enliven the animal spirits, when in a state of dejection and languor; that we may thereby be the better fitted for the active duties of life. But the noblest, and most important use of music, is to assist us in the worship of God, by exciting animation, and enkindling a spirit of devotion in our souls. To effect this, it has a happy and powerful tendency.

The several emotions, or passions of the soul, as one observes, have, each its peculiar language, and give some distinguishing notes to the voice; and these different notes excite in the mind the passions which they represent. So that from the connection existing between sounds and passions, they become by turns the causes and the effects of each other. We know there are certain sounds which inspire with ardor and resolution; and others which melt and dissolve. But if mere sounds have this ef-

fect, surely much greater may be produced by the living sound of human voices, harmoniously combined in singing such sacred songs, as are filled with sentiments of piety and devotion. And such are the known effects of sacred music, applied to psalmody, in the worship of God. All the religions, which have prevailed in the various nations and ages of the world, have agreed in this, to solemnize their social worship, in hymns and songs. In the church of the true God, it has ever been a divinely instituted duty. We may trace it back to the patriarchal dispensation. Moses and the people of Israel, while in Egypt, were acquainted with the practice of singing the praises of God. We find them, immediately upon their leaving Egypt, and passing the Red sea, engaged in singing a song of praise for their deliverance.

That psalmody was an instituted part of social worship, after the giving of the law, and through that dispensation, is evident from the book of Psalms, and the account we have of the temple-service. That it was to be continued under the gospel, is evident, among many other things, from the example of Christ and his disciples, singing a hymn at the celebration of the sacramental supper; and from the example of the Corinthian, Ephesian, and other churches, together with the directions given them by the apostle relative to the duty. After the time of the apostles, the primitive Christians continued to practise it, and that, not only in public worship, but in the social worship of the family. This is evident from the writings of the early fathers. We have the testimony of heathen writers also of that time, that "it was a custom among the Christians to assemble on a certain day, and sing hymns unto Christ, as unto God." And we know that it has been continued ever since, and that it is an exercise in which they greatly delight. They feel disposed to say with the Psalmist, "Awake up, my glory,"



and they desire to awake to the performance of the duty, in all the powers of their souls.

Since, therefore, psalmody is an instituted part of worship ; and since it is our duty to worship our Maker with all our powers, both of body and soul, it becomes us to attend seriously to the subject, and to inquire relative to the *matter* of the duty, and the *manner* in which it should be performed.

1. *With respect to the matter*, or subject of our singing, it appears from the apostle's directions to the Colossians, and also to the Ephesians, as well as from the practice of the Jewish and Christian church, that it must be *Psalms*, *Hymns*, and *Spiritual Songs*.—By *Psalms*, we are to understand more particularly the Book of Psalms, of which David, by divine inspiration, was the principal author. These divine compositions, not only in the original, but in all the translations, paraphrases, and versifications of them, are distinguished by the title of *Psalms*. Other versifications upon sacred subjects, whether those contained in the sacred scriptures, or such as have been written since, illustrative of gospel truths, and in conformity to the word of Christ, are called *Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs*. And doubtless all such are included in the direction the apostle gives: “ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in *Psalms*, *Hymns*, and *Spiritual Songs*.”

2. With respect to the *manner* of performing this duty, the principal directions given us, are, to sing with the understanding, and with the Spirit, making melody, (or singing with grace) in our hearts to the Lord. Singing with the *understanding*, implies the exercise and attention of our rational powers, to the subject matter of the praise ; so as to understand the sentiments expressed. This is of great importance. If we do not understand the praise we offer, what

advantage do we derive from it, any more than in the expression of unmeaning sounds? It is important, therefore, for those who *perform*, to command their thoughts, and attend to the words, for their own advantage; and to pronounce them as distinctly as possible, for the sake of those who *hear*—and if the latter find it difficult so to hear as to understand, they should furnish themselves with books, that they may have their eyes upon the words. This, it is feared, is a point, not sufficiently attended to by the most of our worshipping assemblies.

Singing with the *understanding*, must also imply a competent knowledge both of the theory and practice of the art of music. The design of music, in the social worship of God, is to compose the mind, and enliven the devotion of the heart. But it will not, it cannot have the effect, unless performed with an exactness of time, and harmony of voices. A failure in these will produce a contrary effect. The combination of harsh, untutored voices, in strains of discord, instead of assisting devotion, interrupts it; and excites sensations merely of distress and horror. Great attention, it seems, was paid to this point in the Jewish church, by means of which, the influence of their sacred music upon the worshippers, was great and powerful. Peculiar care was taken, that the choir of singers should be well versed in music, and familiarly acquainted with the sacred songs they performed. Those, who were to perform either with their voices, or instruments, were at the common expense, put under skilful instructors. We read, that the sons of Hermon, were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord;—and that they, with their brethren, were intructed in the songs of the Lord, and were all cunning—and that Chenniah, the chief of the Levites, instructed in song because he was *skilful*. And whenever public praise was performed, a principal musician was over the song called, the *Master of the song*; by which is

doubtless implied, that he led in the tune, giving to the others the *time* : Hence, as we read, they were, *as one to make one sound*. They moved together in exact time and tune ; and the voices on the different parts were all, as it were, melted into one sound. In this respect, the Jewish psalmody was performed with the understanding, or skillfully ; and it ought, as far as possible, to be so performed now in the Christian worship ; both because of the happy effects of it, and because we cannot expect that a *bad* performance, even as to the external part of duty, will be approved of God, while we are capable of a better ; that is, capable of performing it in a manner better adapted to answer the end of psalmody.

But I proceed to mention a more important particular in the manner of singing praise. We ought to sing with the spirit, making melody in our hearts, and to sing with grace in our hearts, *unto the Lord*.

These different expressions imply much the same thing. To sing *with the spirit*, is to sing sincerely, and not with a solemn sound upon a *thoughtless tongue* ;—it is to sing *fervently* and *affectionately*, and in a *spiritual* manner, by assistance of the Spirit of God. It implies, not only, that we enter into the spirit of the sentiments expressed, but that we exercise holy affections towards them, or by means of them ; and that we rise in our spirits, in holy joy, or humble desires towards God, or pour out our soul in penitence and godly sorrow for sin. This is to sing with grace, and to make melody in our hearts. We sing in this manner, when we sing in the exercise of devout affections ; when our worldly and discordant passions are quieted, and the soul smoothed into love, humility, hope and joy ; or when the affections of our hearts answer in unison to the sentiments of the sacred song. Hence we often use the expression of having our hearts *tuned* to the praise of God.

“ Oh, may my heart in tune be found,  
Like David’s harp”.....

Hence, the Psalmist said, “ My heart is *fixed* ; that is, *prepared*, as it might be rendered, or *tuned*—therefore he called upon his tongue, and instruments of art, then used in sacred music, to unite in expressing the devout and grateful affections of his soul. When the heart is in tune, or in the exercise of grace, there is a desire to express its holy affections, in songs of praise. The soul, in the exercise of holy joy, or godly sorrow, delights to express and indulge these affections, in well adapted strains of psalmody. When this is done, there is a reciprocal influence. As the heart affects the voice, causing it to break out in strains of praise, or expressions of sorrow, or any particular affection—so the voice again, in these strains, affects the heart, increasing its sensations to a still higher degree. To sing, therefore, with *grace*, making melody in our hearts, is to have our hearts fixed, or tuned, and warmed by the exercise ; its affections answering to the sentiments of the sacred song.

I only add, that we are to remember that our praise is addressed to the *Lord*, and that we are in his presence : “ Singing with grace in your hearts TO THE LORD.” The duty is performed directly to God, and not to men. It ought, therefore, to be performed with *solemnity*, *reverence*, and *awe*, in our *external deportment* ; on account, both of its happy effect upon the devotion of spectators, and the pain which a vain and trifling deportment will give to the people of God. Add to these considerations, the greatness and majesty of God, who is *fearful in praises*, and therefore to be praised with reverence and godly fear.

Having thus shown, that we ought to consecrate all our powers to the service and worship of God ; and that psalmody is an instituted part of social worship ; briefly considering the matter and manner of the duty, as taught and required in the sacred scriptures, I shall now close with an

## APPLICATION.

The subject is important and practical, as is every thing relating to the worship of God. As such, it applies in the

1. Place, to all present, in general, as members of this church and congregation.\*

We are all particularly reminded, this day, that psalmody is an instituted part of divine worship; and that we are all required to take an active part in its performance; either joining with our voices, or uniting with our hearts, calling upon all the powers of our souls, to awake in the duty. Let us consider and improve it as a duty, a privilege, and a delightful service. And since the sacred music in our public worship, is now performed in so improved and perfect a manner *externally*, let us be thankful for the favor, and the help we may receive from it in our religious assemblies, and use all proper influence and exertions to have it continued. Let us remember, that it is as *really* a duty, to support *this*, as any other part of public worship; and that the expense of preparing for it, ought always to be defrayed by the community. Those who prepare themselves to perform, have to pay, only in their attendance upon the schools, a very large tax; and though it is no more than their duty requires, yet so far as they do it from a desire that this part of God's worship may be decently performed, they deserve our grateful acknowledgments.†

\* This discourse was first delivered by the deceased author to his own charge, on February 3, 1805. Afterwards, at a Singing Lecture, to the people of West Simsbury, (now Canton.)

† Though sundry observations in this part of the discourse appear to have been locally addressed by the preacher; yet they are viewed by the editors, as too important in their nature, and too extensive in their application, to be wholly suppressed; especially as the same method of supporting



It is also an evident certainty, that if you would enjoy any benefit from psalmody in the worship of God, you must frequently *revive* it. There will soon be need of similar exertions, to those which now have been made. When you look round on the young people who now compose this choir, you must expect *soon* to see many of their seats empty. I mean not through neglect of duty, I hope better things of them, but from their being in some instances providentially incapacitated to attend; and in others removed, some into other congregations, and some to the *congregation of the dead*. It will, therefore, soon be incumbent upon those of you, who may survive, to bring forward others who may supply their places. All among you, who have a true regard to the honor of God's worship and the good of posterity, will desire that there may be a long succession of those, whose hearts and voices shall be tuned to the praise of God in this house. Their prayer to God, is

Here may our unborn sons  
And daughters sound thy praise,  
And shine like polish'd stones  
Thro' long succeeding days.  
Here Lord display thy saving power,  
While temples stand, and men adore.

I add, that as we ought to see that the psalmody of the church be well performed; so, when we enjoy the favor, as we now do, we ought to be careful that we do not pervert and abuse it. We ought to be careful when we come into the house of God, to use this help aright, and so as to assist our devotion; and not attend upon it as a mere exhibition of skill. The perfection of external performance should not take

singing schools, and conducting the worship by psalmody, prevails and is practised in almost every town through the New England states.



up our whole attention, and call off our thoughts from the important sentiments expressed. It is possible this may sometimes be the case, in a degree ; though it is not the fault of the music, as having a tendency, in proportion to its perfection, to draw off the mind from the subject ; but if the music be well chosen, and proper for social worship, the fault must be in us. But, in such a case, how great is the loss ! Those who suffer their minds to be wholly taken up with the *order*, the *time*, and the *perfection* of the sound and the harmony, without attending to the sentiment expressed, or the Being to whom the praise is addressed, not only lose the best part of the entertainment, but are guilty of mocking God. How much such lose, many can testify from their own experience, having received, in addition to a taste for music, a love of divine truth. Not, but that merely the music—the sound of voices sweetly harmonizing in solemn and pathetic *airs*, where no sentiment is expressed, might have a good effect on the mind, in respect to devotion ; yet it is the divine truth expressed, which has the principal effect in exciting gracious affections. It is by the *truth*, which through the medium of music melts into the heart, that the most sublime joy and exquisite delight of the soul are excited. In respect to this, hear the experience of Austin, an early Christian father. It has doubtless been often the experience of all who delight in the truth, and in the worship of God. “How much,” said he (addressing himself to God) “how much have I wept at thy hymns and songs, being exceedingly moved at the voices of the church sweetly sounding. Their voices pierced into my ears ; the truth (which they expressed) melted into my heart—from thence, pious affections were raised, and it was well with me.”

I only add, that if psalmody be so important and useful in the public worship of God, it must also be useful in the devotion of the family. It was used by

the primitive Christians in their families. They used, frequently after a meal, to sing a psalm, before rising from the table, to give thanks. This was instead of the vain songs, which the heathen used to sing at their feasts. But especially in the stated worship of the family on the Lord's day, psalmody was practised, and ought now to be practised in Christian families. But

2. The subject applies particularly to the choir of singers.

*My friends*, God has given you natural powers and faculties to worship and praise him; and you are now qualified, at least in respect to the external part, to join in the psalmody of God's house. Consider the importance of performing it with a right heart—of being enabled sincerely to say, "My heart is fixed—awake up, my glory—I myself will awake to praise the Lord." Endeavor to perform the duty to the edification of others, by a suitable deportment. Perform it with reverence and solemnity. Remember that God is *fearful in praises*—that you are in his presence, and must give account. Feel the importance of care to retain your qualifications, and of your persevering in the performance of this duty in the house of God, being always found in your places. Let not the predictions of some, that you will soon grow remiss and leave your seats, after all the pains which have been taken, be verified. Let it not appear by your conduct, in this respect, that you have had no serious motives, in preparing yourselves to join in this part of worship; but on the contrary, manifest that you delight in the duty. This will be the best expression of respect and gratitude you can make to your worthy instructor, for all his exertions and faithful care. I mention this because I presume it will not be a small motive with you. But I will mention an infinitely higher motive. *You owe it to God, and the honor of his wor-*

*ship*. Be exhorted to consider these things seriously. Consider, especially, the necessity of your hearts being prepared, not only for this duty, but for all others, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. Remember you must soon appear at the judgment seat of Christ. Soon will you cease to hear the gospel; and soon your tongues will cease to chant the songs of Zion. Oh, let the thought solemnize your minds—quicken you to seriousness, and a choice of God for your portion. Look forward to the momentous scenes of futurity, and seasonably reflect, how awful the state, after having been active in externally praising God, in his public worship, here on earth, to be confined, at last, to the society of hypocrites, unbelievers, and infernal spirits, where horrid *discord*, *enmity*, and *anguish* of soul will for ever reign! May God, of his grace, deliver us all from such a portion, attune our hearts to his worship here, and prepare us to join the blessed choir of the heavenly world, in singing the glories of God and the Redeemer, to eternal ages! Amen.

---

## S E R M O N XVII.\*

DUTY OF PRAYING FOR MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

---

1 THESSALONIANS V. 25.

*Brethren, pray for us.*

**I**N these words, we notice, in the first place, the endearing appellation, with which the apostle addressed the Christians to whom he wrote. He styles them, *brethren*. Though an apostle, yet considering them as children of the same heavenly Father, and as holding different stations in the same family, with himself, he delighted to address them as brethren.

We notice, secondly, the subject of the apostle's request ; “ Brethren, *pray for us.*” We have, therefore, this *doctrine*.

It is our duty to pray for the ministers of the gospel, and particularly for those with whom we are connected, and who watch for our souls. I would shew,

I. What should be *the subject* of our prayers for the ministers of the gospel. And

\* Preached on a day of fasting, preparatory to an ordination.

II. *Why* we should pray for them. I shall then apply the subject.

I. I would shew what should be *the subject* of our prayers for the ministers of the gospel.

It is obvious that we ought to pray, that they may be furnished for their important work, by a saving knowledge of Christ—a thorough and intimate acquaintance with divine truth—aptness to teach—boldness to declare the counsel of God faithfully and fully—a tender compassion for sinners—and an ardent zeal for God; together with great prudence, patience, prayerfulness, watchfulness, and circumspection, that the ministry be not blamed: in a word, that God would be with them by his Spirit, to assist, own, and succeed them, in their work; that they may save themselves and those who hear them; and, finally, receive a crown of glory, from the chief shepherd, at his appearing.

Nor is it sufficient, that we pray for them, in this general manner; but so far as we become acquainted with any of their particular temptations and difficulties, we should, with reference to these, beseech of the great head of the church, so to impart the influences of his Spirit, to uphold and strengthen them, that their trials may work for their own good, and the furtherance of the gospel.

I proceed to shew, more particularly,

II. *Why* we ought thus to pray for the ministers of the gospel.

1. We ought thus to pray for them, and, especially, that they may have the grace of God in their hearts, and labor sincerely and faithfully in the cause of Christ, because if it be otherwise with them, the consequences will be most awful to themselves.

Graceless and unfaithful ministers are those referred to by Christ, when he says, that at the great day,

many will say unto him : “ Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name ? ” to whom he will reply, “ I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity. ”

The salvation of a minister of the gospel, on its own account, aside from the consequences of it to others, is as important as that of any other man. In some respects it is more so ; for if he perish, his destruction will be peculiarly aggravated. He watches for souls ; and if any perish, through his unfaithfulness (as they will do, if he have no grace) his sin is that of blood-guiltiness, the greatest of sins, a sin against the life of man, and not merely against the life of the *body*, but against the eternal life of the *soul*. Oh, how dreadful must be the doom of such a minister, who to the guilt of many other aggravated sins, the expressions of an impenitent heart, superadds the guilt of the blood of many souls. As we have reason to fear that many will receive this doom, we should pray for all in the ministry, and for all who are about to enter into it, that God would not suffer them to be deceived, but grant them his grace and a saving knowledge of Christ, that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

2. We ought to pray for the ministers of the gospel, on account of the importance of their work, and the infinitely interesting consequences of their faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, to the people of their charge.

Unfaithfulness in a minister, arising from a graceless heart, is most dangerous to a people, and is ordinarily the *occasion* of ruin to many. Whatever speculative knowledge a man may have, yet, if he have not received *the love* of the truth, he will not feel its importance. A man who is unacquainted with the plague of his own heart, will not be inclined to enter deeply into the subject of man’s depravity, and to urge the necessity of the almighty energy of the



Holy Spirit, to change the disposition. He who never knew the terrors of the law, will not be able to say, with the apostle, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." He who sees not the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, will be unskilful in leading distressed souls to a dying Saviour. He who is not experimentally acquainted with gracious exercises, will generally fail in making distinctions between true and false religions. He will not feel for the wounded in spirit, nor be able to apply the balm of the gospel. He will not often preach the distinguishing doctrines of the cross; but choose rather to deliver such discourses as are designed chiefly to *please* his hearers. If they are fond of hearing discourses on mere morality, he will gratify them. If they wish only for a little sabbath-parade, his sermons will be *short and empty*. If some among his people love the distinguishing truths of the gospel, which are hated by others, he will endeavor to use such expressions as may be understood in a sense to satisfy the one, and at the same time in a sense which will not dissatisfy the others. He will rock the cradle of the secure, and never alarm sinners by making the humbling and searching truths of the gospel, blaze upon their guilty consciences. How alarming are the prospects of a people, in these circumstances! How rarely are any among them pricked in the heart, and led to cry, "What must we do to be saved?" How much more hopeful are the prospects of those to whom God gives faithful ministers, such as know the grace of God, and have their hearts fired with holy zeal, in the cause of Christ, and for the salvation of men! They declare the whole counsel of God. They lay open to sinners their awful danger, and their only remedy, beseeching them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Their labors are more or less successful. The word is accompanied with power. Sinners are converted

to God, and saints sweetly fed upon the truth as it is in Jesus.

We are authorized, from scripture and experience, to expect that eminent faithfulness and spirituality in a minister will *usually* be attended with eminent usefulness. Look for instance to Ezra, who was a chief instrument in the great reformation in the Jewish church, about the time of its return from Babylon, a man who “had prepared his heart to seek after the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and judgments in Israel ;” who had “fasted and prayed at the river Ahava,” previous to his great undertaking, and was afterwards “sorely astonished and in heaviness,” and “would eat no meat, nor drink water ;” but “fell upon his knees and spread out his hands to the Lord his God,” on account of the transgression of his people. Look to Nehemiah, another great instrument in the same work,—to the apostles—to Luther, Calvin, and others, in the time of the reformation in the Christian church—to Elliot, Edwards, Brainard, and hundreds of others ; who were eminently spiritual, and peculiarly devoted to God ; whose hearts burned with love to Christ, and to the souls of men ; who looked on their hearers, as Christ looked on Jerusalem, and wept over them ; and whose labors were wonderfully blessed. Blessings from the labors of men like these will usually follow. I say *usually* ; because God, to convince us of his sovereignty, and the insufficiency of means, sometimes suffers it to be otherwise. Still he is not wanting in giving encouragement to what he approves of, wherever it is found. How important, then, it is, that ministers of the gospel should be truly faithful, and spiritual in their labors ; and that we make this the subject of our prayers for them !

3 We should pray for ministers of the gospel, because of the arduous nature of their work ; the trials and temptations, which they meet with, in pursu-

ing it ; and the numerous enemies, within and without, which they must encounter. They are tried by the foolishness of ignorant men, who are opposed to the truth. Hence the apostle says, " Pray for us, that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." They are tried by temptations, addressed to their love of ease, and the applause of men. They find that faithfulness often involves them in trouble ; and that their own hearts occasion much difficulty in the prosecution of their work. Considering how arduous a work it is, how much study and critical attention are requisite, to bring forth the whole counsel of God, rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to every one a portion in due season,—often, too, disheartened and dejected, they exclaim, " Who is sufficient for these things." They are indeed insufficient. Though the treasure of the gospel is committed to them, yet they are but " earthen vessels." " The excellency of the power is of God," and all their sufficiency is of Him. They therefore greatly need and desire the ardent prayers of their brethren. A belief that they receive them is often an excitement to greater animation in duty. If, on the morning of the Lord's day, and at other times, they can reflect that the praying part of their people are now carrying them to the throne of grace in the family or closet, and pleading that in the house of God they may be faithful, spiritual, and successful, how must they be humbled if themselves are cold ; brought with renewed assiduity to the same throne of grace on their own account ; and be thus furnished to come forth to their people, " in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace !"

4 We ought to pray for the ministers of the gospel, on account of the happy effects it will have on our own minds. It will have a powerful tendency to bind us to them in Christian affection. We can-

not truly pray for our minister : we cannot feel such an interest in his trials, as to present them before the throne of grace, and at the same time be unfriendly and uncandid towards him, and disposed to publish and exaggerate his failings and imperfections. My brethren, I will venture the enmity of the man who sincerely and daily prays for me, and carries my failings to the throne of grace. He will not exaggerate them *there* ; nor, after carrying them *there*, will he be disposed to exaggerate, or expose them *elsewhere*. To pray for our enemies tends to prevent or soften down the acerbity of feeling, which might otherwise exist, and to call into exercise a proper temper towards them. How important then, it is that we pray for ministers of the gospel, and especially for those, who watch for our souls ! It will probably be a means of rendering *them* faithful ; and will certainly tend to render *us* friendly and candid, and thus prepare our hearts to receive the word of God which they dispense, and to bring forth the fruits of inward godliness, in a well ordered life and conversation.

What remains is a brief

#### APPLICATION.

1. Do unfaithful ministers expose themselves to a dreadful condemnation, and should we therefore pray that they may be faithful ? How unreasonable then it is, and how evidential of perverseness, to censure them, even in one's heart, for exhibiting such truths as are evidently contained in the bible ! Can the bible be the word of God, and yet teach doctrines not to be preached, by those who are under obligations " to declare the whole counsel of God ? " Indeed should any really differ from the preacher in sentiment, yet, to treat him unkindly, to speak of him with bitterness and malignity, or even cherish unfriendly feelings towards him in the heart, would be very disingenuous, and totally unchristian. Would

any serious mind think the better of a man, for withholding, or disguising what he supposed to be the truth, merely to please his hearers? Would any wish his minister not to be a man of integrity? Would he wish him to be a mere temporizer, who, even in speaking to God for immortal souls, would attempt to please at the expense of truth? Yet when any censure, or are angry with ministers for inculcating what they think to be the truth, they practically declare that they would have them disregard all honesty, truth, and duty. No person who sincerely prays for his minister will be guilty of this.

2. In view of what has been said, how important, how solemn, how arduous, must appear the undertaking, to preach the gospel to perishing sinners, and take the charge of immortal souls! And in this view, how solemn is the present occasion, and how interesting the expected transaction of the ensuing week, to our young brother, the colleague pastor elect of this people!

DEAR SIR,

You doubtless feel the transaction to be, in its consequences, infinitely important, and that you need the prayers of all the people of God, that you may be prepared for the scene. But we trust you have counted the cost, and sincerely committed the matter to God, saying, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" and that you are ready to serve, in the gospel of his Son, in this place, if he open to you the door, giving yourself unto this people, as their servant in Christ Jesus. Be exhorted still to give yourself to humiliation and prayer, that you may be prepared for the solemn day of your consecration. Should you be set apart to the ministry, Oh! how much would you need the presence of God in that transaction!—How much in the whole course of your work!—You are doubtless ready to say, as did Moses, "If thy presence go not up with me, take



me not hence." But while you feel your own insufficiency, and look to the head of the church, you may hope for his presence, to support and succeed you, while laboring in his name, for he hath said, "Lo I am with you."

3. Is the gospel ministry of so great importance to a people as we have seen; and faithfulness or unfaithfulness in it, of such serious influence and lasting consequence? Then, this day is also a solemn day to this church and society.

You are contemplating, my friends, an important transaction. Your aged pastor, having worn out his life and strength in your service, has the satisfaction of seeing you, who are all his children, united in the choice of one to be a colleague and successor in the ministry, to whom he can cheerfully leave you. You are hoping that the great head of the church is about to bestow upon you an ascension gift,—a pastor after his own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. If you are sensible of the value of such a gift, you will be humble on this day in view of your unworthiness; and will rejoice on the day appointed for the bestowment, with humble thankfulness and holy joy. Such a gift, God grant that you may receive, and that we may all be prepared to give up an account of the improvement of our talents. Amen.





---

## S E R M O N XVIII.

REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

---

### HEBREWS IV. 9.

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

THE apostle in this chapter is endeavoring to show, that for Christians under the gospel, as well as the Israelites, there is a rest as an object of their hopes and labors—a rest, typified by God's resting on the seventh day, and blessing it ; and by Israel's resting in the land of Canaan. He proves this, by the words of David in the ninety-fifth Psalm, which intimate that there was then a rest to be obtained by God's people ; and that, in order to possess it, they must hear his voice, and not, as their fathers were, be unbelieving and disobedient.

The reasoning of the apostle, in brief, is this : that if Joshua had given to the Israelites that final rest, which God intends for his people, David would not have spoken of another rest which was future, as he did, even when they were in possession of Canaan. He therefore draws the conclusion in the text, that "there remaineth a rest to the people of God."—Suffer me, my brethren, to lead your minds, from these words,

I. To consider the character of those who shall enter into this rest. And,

II. The nature of that rest which is reserved or remaineth for such.

I. What is the character of those who are entitled to the rest respected, and who shall enter into it?

They are called in the text, "the people of God." But all are not God's people. Some openly renounce him, and set themselves against him and his kingdom; and some, who profess to be his people, and avouch him to be their God, yet in works deny him, and will not be owned by him, or suffered to see his rest.—Who then are the people of God, and by what are they distinguished? Let us hear the description from God's Spirit, by the mouth of the apostle, Phil. iii. 3. "We are the circumcision," (i. e. the true people of God,) "who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

The people of God of old, who were to enter into the rest of Canaan, were distinguished from the rest of the world, by many things, and particularly, by circumcision. In allusion to this, the apostle, speaking of Christians, who should enter into that rest which remaineth, calls them "the circumcision;" they being indeed the subjects of that circumcision, which, as expressed by the apostle, "is made without hands." And he adds several things as the peculiar characteristics of such. As,

1. That they "worship God," and "worship him in the spirit." It is a characteristic of the enemies of God, that they neglect prayer—they call not upon the name of the Lord. Or if at any time they begin to call upon him, it is in a formal and servile manner—they delight not in the duty, and offer no spiritual service. But the people of God give themselves

unto prayer, secret, social, and public. They delight to draw near to God. Their language is, "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy."

They "worship God in the Spirit." The Spirit helpeth their infirmities, and maketh intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered: The Spirit of Christ is sent forth into their hearts, crying, Abba Father.

2. It is a characteristic of the people of God, that they rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is the foundation of all their hopes, and their hearts are drawn out towards him, as being the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of his person: the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. "Whom, having not seen" (says the apostle) "ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

3. It is a characteristic of God's people, that they have no confidence in the flesh. They are deeply convinced that in them i.e. "in their flesh dwelleth no good thing." They feel totally helpless in themselves, and wholly dependent on God. They see the folly of trusting to their own strength, or wisdom, and look, for every thing, to Christ alone. He is of God, made unto them, wisdom, strength, sanctification, and redemption; and they cheerfully acquiesce in the divine injunction, "let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." Such are some of the distinguishing marks of the people of God, who are to enter into his rest.

We proceed therefore,

II. To consider the nature of this rest, and what is included in it.

1. We notice that it is spoken of as *remaining*. The idea is, that it is future; and is not to be enter-

ed upon in this life. The rest respected is the heavenly rest.

There is a sense however, in which all Christians enter into a present rest. They are freed from the terrors of a guilty conscience, through the blood of the atonement. They delight in the sabbaths, the ordinances, and the word of God. They are fully satisfied with the way of life in the gospel. They find joy and peace in believing; and can testify to the faithfulness of Christ in fulfilling his promise:—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In the world they have tribulation, but in him they have peace. A peace and rest of soul, which the world can neither give nor take away. But the heavenly rest is infinitely superior to this. It is a rest from all labor and pain of body, from all crosses and afflictions; and from all sin and temptation. The present life is a life of labor. In consequence of the fall, labor, fatigue, and toil, either of body or mind, are the portion of the children of men. Not only so, but some of our fellow creatures, and most commonly some of our acquaintances and friends, if not ourselves also, are groaning in distress, and borne down under a weight of sorrow. But from all these, the children of God rest at death. Sickness never enters the tomb. Pain and distress are not known in the grave. The body of the saint lies down in the dust, and sweetly sleeps until the resurrection. Of this, Job in his affliction had a pleasing view, when he said, "there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." The children of God, also, at death rest from crosses and afflictions. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. Disappointments, crosses, bereavements, and an almost infinite variety of sorrows, are constantly ready to attack us. Among the trials which are the lot of men, in this life, none are more distressing than the death of near connections, and beloved friends.

Is the husband deprived of the wife of his bosom, the partner of his joys, the solace of his affliction? Is the wife bereft of a kind husband, her guide, her protector, her faithful, tender, and affectionate friend? Is the kind father called to close the eyes of an only son, or the fond mother to part with the smiling infant at her breast? These indeed are trying scenes! They bring a weight of sorrow which almost breaks the heart. Says the poet,

“ Oh, the tender ties,  
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart!  
Which, broken, break them; and drain off the soul  
Of human joy; and make it pain to live.  
And is it then to live, when such friends part?  
’Tis the survivor dies.”

But from all these afflictions the people of God, at death, are free. Nor shall they any more feel any loss, disappointment, or sorrow. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Then also they rest from sin and temptation; and from the molestations of all their spiritual enemies. While in this life they labor almost continually under the burden of sin. They find so many lusts unmortified; are surrounded with so many temptations; and so often fall into sin, that they groan and are troubled as Paul was, when he said, “ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” In this world the people of God are like Israel in a wilderness—in the country of their enemies, surrounded with them on every side. The world, the flesh, and the devil, combine against them, perplex them, and retard their progress—so that their whole life is an arduous warfare. But no sooner do they pass the Jordan of death, and enter into the heavenly Canaan, than they rest from sin and temptation, and all their spiritual contests—they no more fall into sin—they no more endure temptation, or are led astray—they enter upon an holy rest—they see God as he is,



and their sanctification is perfected. Nor is that rest, which remaineth to the people of God, a mere rest or cessation from painful labors, sorrows, temptations, and sin. It is a state of holy activity in the service and enjoyment of God. A state of inactivity would be quite inconsistent with their rational natures, and indeed with happiness. They will be continually engaged in the service of God, and in the contemplation and enjoyment of his perfections. Hence it is called, a "sabbatism," the keeping of a sabbath. Thus it is in the original, and it is observable that the apostle here changes the word, which he had before used to signify rest. That used in the former verses denotes chiefly a cessation or rest from labor and trouble. But the word here used includes more. It is the keeping of a sabbath, and the Christian sabbath; as kept by the saints here, in the private and public worship of God, is a true though faint emblem of it. As in this the people of God not only cease from secular labors and cares, but are engaged in devout meditation, hearing of the things of God and his kingdom, and uniting in his praise; so in that rest, that sabbath which remaineth to the people of God, they not only rest from their labors, sorrows, and sins, but are engaged in the glorious service and worship of God. There they worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus in the highest perfection. They are constantly improving in the knowledge of God and the Saviour. They are employed in studying and learning the divine perfections, and considering the relations in which God stands to the several orders of beings through the universe, and the schemes of his providence and grace relating to them. They dwell in the immediate presence of God—and see him, not darkly as here, but face to face. As their knowledge of him increases, they increase in love to him, and in the highest satisfaction in his favor and friendship. This produces the sublimest exercises of devotion,

and calls forth their whole souls in the most enraptured and exalted strains of adoration and praise ; and what gives perfection to their joy, is the knowledge that their rest shall be uninterrupted and eternal. The promise of Christ, to those who overcome in the spiritual warfare, is that he will make them “pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out, for ever.” And because Christ lives they shall live also, and be ever with the Lord.

Thus, my brethren, I have given you a very brief and imperfect sketch of the character of God’s people, and the nature and glory of that rest which remaineth for them. I have indeed but just opened the subject. But it is plain, and may be pursued by you with advantage and delight, in your retirement. I shall now close with a brief

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. And in the first place, let the friends of God receive support and encouragement from this subject, under all their labors and sorrows. It is calculated for this end, and this is an improvement which they ought to make of it. It is true that they have many difficulties to encounter, and are liable to great burdens and pressing sorrows. But the period approaches when they will cease from all their labors and sorrows, and be at rest. For there remaineth a rest to the people of God. That rest, those who are now his friends shall certainly enjoy. This consideration may serve to encourage, to support, and to animate them in their course. The thought of arriving at home, and finding a cordial and joyful welcome from a kind family, is anticipated with pleasure, and serves, in a degree, to support us under the burden of a long and tedious journey, and to quicken us in our progress. In like manner, you may be supported, O Christian, under all your labors, and in every conflict, by meditating on the rest before you. You may anticipate your cordial welcome

to heaven, and the pleasing congratulations of the benevolent family above. You may anticipate a state of perfect rest and peace, and of a most happy and glorious employment in the service and praise of God, in his immediate presence—may look forward to a time, when all tears shall be wiped from your eyes, and all sorrow shall be at an end. You may meditate much on these things, and find them comforting and useful. It will have a tendency to support you under sorrow, to put a smile on the face of adversity, to render the burden of life easy, and animate you to run the race set before you with patience.

2. This subject is calculated to administer peculiar consolation, to all who mourn the death of pious relations and friends. When such are called away, our loss indeed is great, and the scenes are distressing to nature, yet we may follow them in their ascending flight, and behold them leaving their load of pain, of sorrow, and of sin behind them, and assuming the glorious robes of purity and bliss—entering into the joy of their Lord—beholding him as he is, and being transformed into his glorious likeness. And as at their first repentance, there was joy over them in the presence of the angels of God; so now they are congratulated by the spirits of the just made perfect, and with them they enter upon that rest, that keeping of a sabbath—which remaineth for the people of God. And shall we in this view mourn their departure? Shall we wish them to return to us, to this sinful state, to this world of tribulations? Or shall we consider them as lost to us, or to the kingdom of God? No, we are to consider them as but removed from a lower to a higher sphere of usefulness, to a state of enjoyment, for which they were trained up here, where we may hope to meet them, (if through faith and patience we are followers of them and of the Saviour,) to meet them, and enjoy them, and be enjoyed by them, in a manner, inconceivably more perfect, satisfying, and conducive to the

glory of God, than could exist in this imperfect state. In whatever age, or station, or circumstance of life, they are taken from us—still we have the same ground for consolation—and though we may mourn for ourselves, and be affected at our loss of them, while we remain here, yet, reflecting on the infinite wisdom and goodness of the hand which removes them, and the joy into which they have entered, we have abundant occasion to bless God, and to comfort one another with these words. But of whom may we entertain such hopes? and whom may we, with humble confidence, consider as thus exalted in perfection and bliss? Not all—not any except those who, in life and in death, have given evidence of being friends, and followers of Jesus. It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises.

The heavenly rest remaineth only for the people of God. And though we may be inexcusable in not being sufficiently ready to glorify God, in respect to the death of his saints, in eminent instances of the triumph of faith, yet perhaps we are more likely to err in professing strong hopes of them, when they have been no way distinguished for evident fruits of piety. Many are apt to entertain a hope for their deceased friends, and consider them as having entered upon the heavenly rest, upon very slight grounds, and when they have given little or no evidence of being the children of God. But this does dishonor to the gospel, and injures those who would wish the qualifications for heaven to be low, and that it might be sufficient to be the subjects of a little seriousness in death. A little serious conversation on a death bed is often made a ground of very comfortable hopes, concerning persons who have paid no serious attention to religion, in a state of health. But what dependence can be placed on such appearances? They afford scarcely the color of evidence, that the person has any vital religion. Where is the person who will not feel the importance of religion on a sick bed?

and who, if he have reason, will not say some serious things? The greatest sinners, in the near approach of death, usually feel great anxiety. They feel the importance of religion, talk of it in the most feeling manner, and make the most solemn promises, to change their life and turn to God, if spared. But experience proves, in many instances, this goodness to be as the morning cloud. Many persons of this description, on the return of health, lose all sense of religion, and return with brutal stupidity to the pleasures of sin. There may indeed be some, who are savingly wrought upon, and who become new creatures, on a death bed; but this is not ordinarily to be expected. The only ground on which we can build a confident and rational hope, concerning deceased friends, is their life and conversation in a state of health. It is from the tenor of a man's life for months and years that we are to learn his character; and not from a few serious things he may say, just before death. If he have professed religion and honored his profession; if he have been uniformly honest and upright; if he have appeared to pay a strict and conscientious regard to religious duties, and divine institutions; if, to crown all, he have appeared to rest in the plan of salvation, opened in the gospel, and to rejoice in Christ Jesus, making him all his hope, and all his dependence, and having no confidence in the flesh; if this, according to the general testimony of survivors, was his character, we may exercise a confident hope of him, that he is of those, for whom there remaineth a heavenly rest. Therefore, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and "fear, lest a promise being left us, entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" Amen.



---

## SERMON XIX.

### ABIDING IN CHRIST.

---

#### 1 JOHN II. 6.

*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

THE apostle John, in all his epistles, spake much of real and experimental religion. He did not reason like saint Paul, nor dwell so much upon the explication and defence of the more mysterious doctrines of the gospel. Benevolence, love to God, to the brethren, and to mankind, and the distinguishing characteristics of vital religion, were the subjects upon which he delighted to dwell. He spake much also of external religion, was frequent in pointing out marks of sincerity and hypocrisy, and urging the importance that all who profess to be Christians should walk externally, and also in all respects, according to their Christian profession and the example of Christ. These characteristics of the apostle John appear particularly in this epistle, and in this chapter. In the text and verses preceding, he is pointing out the marks of sincerity and hypocrisy in profession, and the importance of walking as Christ walked. "Hereby" says the apostle "we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I



know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." These are weighty and important words. They declare that if any say they abide in Christ, it is incumbent upon them to walk even as he walked ; and that those who do not thus walk prove themselves to be hypocrites. And indeed this is a most rational truth : For the tree must be known by its fruit, and we know that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. For our improvement therefore at this time, let us enquire in the

I. Place, what is to be understood by abiding in Christ ?

II. What is it to say we abide in him ?

III. What is it to walk as he walked ? And

IV. Show the necessity and importance of walking even as Christ walked.

1. Then, the subject of enquiry is, what we are to understand by abiding in Christ. And here we may observe, in brief, that to abide in Christ is to be united to him, by that faith which is of the operation of the Holy Ghost. It is to believe him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the only Saviour of the world ; cordially to accept of him as offered in the gospel, and to trust in him, at all times, for salvation. The expression "abiding in Christ" has very evident reference to that expressive figure, so frequently used by Christ, to represent the important and close union, which takes place between him and believers, by their faith viz. the union of the branch to the vine, and the necessity of its abiding in the vine, in

order to bear fruit. "I am the true vine," says the Saviour, "and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit;" that is, as when a branch, from a wild vine, is grafted into the true vine, yet does not partake of the juice, and form no vital union, but is fruitless and withers, and is cast away by the husbandman; so those who are ingrafted into Christ by a mere outward profession, but have no faith in him, receive no supplies of grace from the vine, and consequently bear no fruit, are cut off and cast away, as having no part nor lot in him.

Again, when a wild branch is really ingrafted into the true vine, though it receive but little nourishment—though it but just live, and bear but little fruit, yet the husbandman will purge, or prune it, that the union may be stronger and stronger, and the fruit be increased; so when Christians, who by nature are branches of a wild degenerate vine, are cut off and ingrafted into Christ the true vine—that is, when they are really united to him by faith, though the union be ever so weak, and they receive but small supplies of grace, and bear but little fruit; yet their heavenly Father, who is the spiritual husbandman, will prune and cherish them—will cause their faith to grow stronger and stronger, and their fruit also to increase. "Abide in me," continues the Saviour, "and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." By this beautiful comparison, which the Saviour condescended to make, we are greatly assisted in understanding the nature of a

spiritual union to Christ, or what it is to abide in him. As the branch when grafted in cannot be united to the vine, unless it receive some nourishment from it, so there can be no spiritual union between us and Christ, unless we receive the spirit of Christ. And as it is by means of the sap only that the branch receives nourishment from the vine ; so it is only through the medium or channel of faith, that Christians can receive from Christ the supplies of divine grace, whereby the union may be strengthened, and their fruitfulness increased. We see therefore, that to abide in Christ implies, that we are new creatures, that we are created anew in Christ Jesus, unto righteousness and true holiness. " If any man be in Christ," says the apostle, " he is a new creature : old things are done away, behold all things are become new." It implies that we who were once afar off, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, without hope, without Christ, and without God in the world, are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ—brought cordially to submit to him in all his offices of prophet, priest, and king—to receive and observe his words as divine truth—to trust alone in his atonement and perfect righteousness, for acceptance with God—to acquiesce in his government, and rejoice that he reigns, and is sitting on God's holy hill of Zion. In a word ; really to abide in Christ is to be real Christians. It is probable therefore, that many who say they abide in Christ do not, but are, as the apostle stiles them, hypocrites and liars, having no truth in them. Let us enquire, therefore in the

II. Place, what it is to say, we abide in Christ. And I would observe, that, from what has been said, it appears, that to say, we abide in Christ, is to say, we are his obedient faithful subjects—that we believe in him as the Son of God ; and submit to him in

all his offices of prophet, priest and king. Now we may say this either implicitly or expressly, and that in many ways.

1. We implicitly say we abide in Christ, or that we believe in, and submit to him, when we externally pray to God the Father in his name, observe the Lord's day, and attend public worship. By such conduct, we plainly declare that we consider him as a divine mediator, and that we submit to him, and rejoice in him as such. Yea, I conclude, that those who pray in the name of Christ, do commonly plainly declare in their prayers, that they believe him to be the Son of God, and that they choose him for their portion, and desire to be conformed to him. Now by those who know not our hearts, and are ignorant of our walk, it will be concluded, that we are sincere in such requests, that they proceed from love to God—that we do believe in his Son, and desire to be conformed to him. It is true they may afterwards be convinced by our walk, that our hearts were not in our prayers, that they were mere mockeries of God, and that we had no hearty desire for the things we petitioned. This however, will not alter the language of our prayers, and external public worship. The implicit language of them to the world, whether it be true or whether it be false, whether we walk accordingly or not, is that we abide in Christ, or that we receive him and submit to him as our prophet, priest and king. Again,

2. We expressly say we abide in Christ when, in addition to external worship, we declare, though it be only to single individuals, that we have hope in Christ; meaning thereby that we trust we have been the subjects of special grace, which has removed our hard heart, and given us a heart of flesh—a heart to love God. There are undoubtedly many, who say that they abide in Christ, and that

very openly, though not in the congregation of God's people. But

3. We say very especially, and most expressly, that we abide in Christ, when we make a public profession of religion in the congregation of God's people, and join ourselves in communion with the visible church of Christ. This is to say or profess, in the most public and explicit manner, that we abide in Christ—that we receive him as our Saviour, trust in him, and submit to him, as our prophet, priest, and king. And this I conclude is that saying, or professing, to which the apostle had principal reference, when he said, “He that saith, he abideth in Christ, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.” We shall therefore enquire

III. What it is to walk as Christ walked. And I observe, in general, that it is to set the Lord always before our faces, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Micah vi. 8. It implies that we take Christ for our pattern, imitate him in all his imitable examples, and, having the hope of Christians, that we purify ourselves even as he is pure. More particularly,

1. To walk as Christ also walked, is to live in such a manner that our path, or course of life, may be like that of the just, which, like the morning light, shineth brighter and brighter. Walking implies motion. Christ was always moving forward, and constantly executing the great work for which he came into the world. His days were employed in instructing, exhorting, and warning sinners, and in performing the part of an earthly and heavenly physician, and many of his nights were spent wholly in prayer to God. If, therefore, we walk as he also walked, we shall never be weary in well doing, we shall ever account it our greatest honor and happi-



ness to be found about our Father's business, improving the talents he has committed to our charge. Again, Christ was ever obedient to all the commands of his Father ; he was obedient even unto death. To walk as he walked, therefore, is to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded us—to observe all the ordinances, precepts, and duties of the gospel, both internally and externally. Again, if we take Christ for our example in our Christian walk, or race—if we look to him, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame, we shall suffer afflictions and crosses with patience ; and shall despise the shame, and rise superior to all the ridicule and opposition of a wicked world. In a word, to walk as Christ walked, implies that we live in such a manner as to honor our profession, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and manifest to the world that we are the subjects of the wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. I come now in the

IV. Place, to mention briefly some of the reasons, why those who say they abide in Christ, or profess to be Christians, ought thus to walk. And

1. It is highly incumbent upon them, because God the Saviour has most absolutely commanded it, and that in many ways and instances. He directed his disciples, and through them all the ministers of the gospel, to teach those, who profess to believe in him, to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded them, all the ordinances, duties, and principles of the gospel. If any man serve me says Christ, that is, profess to serve me, let him follow me, let him walk as I have walked, and thereby manifest that he is really my servant. Again,



2. It is important that those, who say they abide in Christ, should walk as he walked, because it is impossible they should receive salvation, or be truly happy in any other way. Without holiness no man can see the Lord. That faith only is genuine, which works by love and purifies the heart—and that profession only will be approved, which is accompanied with a holy walk. Again, those who, in any way, profess to be Christians, and yet walk not as Christ walked, act a most false, absurd, and inconsistent part. There is no truth nor consistency in them. Says the apostle, “He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” And the Saviour himself intimates, that it implies the greatest absurdity, to call him Lord, Lord, and yet not do the things which he says. I add

3. That the conduct of those who say they abide in Christ, and yet do not maintain a Christian walk, is not only inconsistent and absurd, but to the highest degree criminal, and displeasing to God. It is pretending friendship to the cause of Christ, while at the same time, they are walking on, hand in hand, with Satan the grand adversary. It is disgracing and injuring the cause of religion, in a way, in which open enemies cannot do it; and therefore must be exceedingly provoking to God. Such partial and hypocritical professions of religion, are reprobated by Christ in the strongest terms. In the xxiii of Matthew, Christ several times in succession, accuses the pharisees of it, pronounces a woe upon them, and declares, that, for such conduct, they shall receive the greater damnation.

But not to enlarge. As I have endeavored to show what it is to abide in Christ; and what to say we abide in him; also what it is to walk as Christ walked; and the importance of so walking, I shall now close with a brief

## APPLICATION.

And, in the first place, our subject naturally applies itself to such as, in some sense, say they abide in Christ, by praying in his name, and observing some external duties, and yet neglect to walk as he walked, or yield any cordial or true obedience. We have observed that to pray in the name of Christ, attend public worship &c. is implicitly to say, we believe in Christ, acknowledge his divinity, and submit to him. But is it not to be feared, that there are many who do this, who yet declare, by their walk, that they do not submit to him, and that they desire not the knowledge of his ways? But what absurd and inconsistent conduct is this? You pray in his name, perhaps, and acknowledge his divinity; and yet, by the general course of your conduct actually rise in rebellion against him. You verbally pray for the influences of his Spirit, yet constantly resist and strive against them, and are willingly subject to the spirit and influence of Satan, the God of this world. You ask to be delivered from temptation to sin, and yet constantly and voluntarily expose yourselves to temptation. You ask to be conformed to the holy character of Christ, and that you may have God for your portion; and that while you are at the same time greedily heaping up the things of the world to consume upon your lusts; thereby manifesting that you prefer sinful and worldly gratifications, to the favor of God, and that you choose this world for your portion, in preference to a portion in Christ. Now such inconsistent conduct needs only to be stated in order to expose the absurdity of it. But here let it not be thought, that by endeavoring to expose the absurdity of such conduct, we would recommend to any, in order to be consistent, to cast off fear and restrain prayer, and neglect the external observance of duties. This, at best, would be but stepping from one inconsistency to another. We would recommend a better, and indeed the only way to be consistent, namely, to see to it that your hearts con-

cur with your petitions—that, with external obedience, you give that also which is internal ; in a word, that you have penitent and believing hearts, and actually place your supreme affection on God. These, in the words of scripture, ought ye to do, and not leave the other undone. Indeed, were they once done, the other would not be long left undone. Those who have penitent, believing hearts, and love to walk as Christ walked, will not fail to express their love and their dependence, in all proper external ways. Let not such, therefore, as do not say they abide in Christ, but the contrary, think that they are free from inconsistency. It is probable there are not a few, who acknowledge the divinity of Christ and the scriptures, and call themselves Christians, in distinction from Deists, Jews, Mahometans, &c. and yet make no dedication of themselves to Christ, refuse to pray in his name, and constantly and professedly neglect all submission to him, both internal and external.

But let us see whether such are free from absurdity. You acknowledge, by the supposition, that Christ is the Son of God, consequently you must grant that his words are divine truth ; and that all his threatenings against sinners, and those who refuse to have him reign over them, will be fulfilled. You must acknowledge (for the scriptures declare it) that God is most amiable, and a being infinitely worthy of our constant, cordial obedience and supreme affection, and that we are absolutely dependent upon him ; and yet by casting off fear and restraining prayer, and by all your conduct, you declare that he is unworthy of your service, and that you are independent of him, or wish to be independent. You acknowledge that nothing separates those who do not abide in Christ, (of which number you profess to be) from eternal burning, but the brittle thread of life ; and yet you are at ease—you despise the Saviour, and neglect the gospel ; and go on from day to

day, indulging in sin, saying to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. What is this but absurdity ? Yea is it not madness ? We see, therefore, that there is no way to be consistent, short of cordially embracing the gospel, and walking as Christ walked. I say there is no way to be consistent short of this, except we plunge into the absurdity of supposing, what is impossible, namely that the bible which condemns sin and Satan throughout, and is directly calculated to destroy both—was yet forged by Satan himself, or wickedness under his influence, and is imposed upon the world by him, in order to destroy his own kingdom. But

2. Our subject addresses itself to such as do, in express words, declare that they have hope in Christ, and do humbly trust, that they abide in him, and have received a heart to love God, religion, and holiness—and yet neglect to confess Christ, in the congregation of God's people, and commemorate his dying love. He that saith he abideth in Christ ought so to walk, as Christ walked. But how did Christ walk ? Truly by observing all the commands of his Father, and he has explicitly directed all those who profess to be his followers, to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded—there is, therefore, no excuse which can be made for those who, after a serious, thorough, and deliberate self-examination, find reason to conclude, and do really exercise a hope, that they have become new creatures, and have chosen God for their portion, and who nevertheless neglect the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Satan sometimes suggests that assurance, full, undoubting assurance, is necessary to an attendance on this ordinance. But how, my friends, shall we obtain this assurance ? If you will just turn to the 3d verse of our context you will see. Says the apostle, “ hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” We are here, as well as in many other places, plainly taught, that

we must never expect to know that we know him, that is, to have full, rational, and constant assurance of an interest in Christ, so long as we live in the neglect of any known command. I would, therefore, as speaking for God, earnestly beseech all those, if any such there are, who say that they abide in Christ, to examine candidly, whether they walk as Christ walked, and whether they are not injuring both the cause of religion and their own souls.

3. Our subject very naturally addresses itself to those of us, my brethren, who have in the most express manner, said that we abide in Christ, and have frequently renewed, and are now again about to renew and seal our solemn profession, by partaking of the sacrament of his body and blood.

We have said, and we do now this day say, in the face of the world, that we abide in Christ, that we avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be our God ; and that Jesus Christ is our only Saviour, and submit to him in all his offices of prophet, priest, and king. But in saying thus we say many things. We say that we trust we have been brought to see our lost, wretched condition by nature, and the way of life by Christ, and to bow at the foot of sovereign grace. We say, by our profession, that we have faith in Christ, consequently that we are united to him, as the branch is to the vine ; that we have the same mind which was also in him ; that we have chosen God for our portion ; and that his glory is the ultimate end of all our actions. Such, my brethren, is the language of our profession ; but what is the language of our conduct—what is our walk ? Do we walk even as Christ walked ? How does our path appear to ourselves ? How does it appear in the view of the world ? Does it like the morning light shine brighter and brighter ? Do we delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man, and endeavor by his grace to observe all things whatsoever he has



commanded us? Have we become as little children, humble, meek, dependent? Do we strive to lay aside every weight, and guard against the sins that most easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us: looking to him for an example who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame? In a word, do we live and walk in such a manner, as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Surely having said that we abide in Christ, we ought so to walk, and that for many reasons which have been already pointed out, and particularly, because by a contrary walk we shall highly provoke God, and dishonor the cause of religion. You must be sensible, that when Christ is wounded in the house of his friends, his cause will be more injured, than if attacked by open enemies. All therefore who have named the name of Christ, are under peculiar obligations to depart from iniquity, and exert themselves in favor of his cause. Do we, my brethren, answer our obligations, in this respect? May it not be inquired, with respect to us, and Christians in general, at the present day, "What do we more than others?" Where is that zeal and engagedness which ought to appear in Christians? Where is that plain line which was once drawn between the church and the world? Does it disappear, because a carnal world begins to be better pleased with the pure doctrines of the gospel? Or is it because that Christians, in general, are more cold, and more conformed to the world? The question is not a hard one to decide.

Reflecting on these things, let us take heed to our steps, and our walk—and as children of the light and the day, let us not sleep as do others—but let us watch and be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. Let us keep our lights trimmed and burning;



having the oil of grace in the lamp of our profession—that whenever God in his providence may appear to say to all, or to any one of us, “Behold, I come quickly,” our hearts may echo with devout joy, “Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.”

---

## SERMON XX.

THE OFFERS OF SALVATION INDISCRIMINATE AND  
FREE.

---

JOHN VI. 37.

*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

**T**HIS is a declaration of the Saviour of sinners. It is a virtual invitation to them all to come to him; to come to him that they may have life. It is an assurance that if any one will come, he shall not come in vain—that he shall not be cast out, but received to all the blessings of the gospel, which he hath purchased by his atonement and righteousness. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” This, to lost and perishing sinners, is a declaration of infinite importance.

By the offer of salvation in the gospel, they are highly distinguished from the angels who fell. This distinguishing favor was purchased at an infinite expense, even the death of the Son of God; and now, if it be finally treated with neglect—if, while the divine Saviour invites sinners to come unto him, they turn a deaf ear, and continue to set at nought his counsels, they must perish under an aggravated condemnation. This will be the condemnation, that

“light hath come into the world, and they have loved darkness rather than light.”

In discoursing on this subject, I shall

I. Show what is meant by coming to Christ.

II. That all may come to him ; the invitation of the gospel being indiscriminate and free. And

III. Consider the good proposed, and to be enjoyed by all who truly come to the Saviour.

I. I am to show what is meant by coming to Christ.

This is not to be understood literally, as being a bodily approach to Christ. This is now impossible, for the heavens have received him from our sight ; and although his divine presence is every where, yet his glorified body is only in heaven. And were he on earth, as he once was, such an approach would be of no advantage, as appears from the context, where he says to the people who were round about him, “Ye also have seen me and believe not.” Nor is it merely coming to his house, where he is preached, or to his table where he is set forth. Many do all this, who yet do not come to Christ, but are far from him. The coming here intended is spiritual. It is the coming of the heart—it is the motion of the mind—it is the cleaving of the soul to him, as he is exhibited in the gospel. In verse 35th of the context, Christ says, “I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

Coming to Christ, and believing on him, are here used as synonymous phrases. Coming to Christ, therefore, must imply a sense of sin ; godly sorrow for it, and such an application of the soul to Christ, as has respect to the offices which he sustains, in the work of our salvation,—those of a prophet, priest, and king. It is the receiving or embracing him, as

he is offered in the gospel ; putting our trust in him alone for salvation. Having remarked these few things, respecting the import of coming to Christ : I proceed to show

II. That all may come to him ; the invitation of the gospel being indiscriminate and free.

By this is meant that sinners are not under any *natural* inability to come to Christ. The invitation is to all under the gospel—and the only reason why any do not come to him, and receive the salvation which he gives, is the want of a heart or disposition. This will appear by attending to a few passages of scripture. The text is full to the purpose : “ He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Here is an implicit invitation to all, with an absolute declaration, that whoever comes shall be received. In connection with this, let me turn your thoughts to Christ’s words in the 40th verse of the 5th chapter : “ Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” Here again it is evident, that sinners are invited to come to Christ ; that if they were to come, they would have life ; and that the only reason of their not coming is their unwillingness. It is their dislike of Christ, and the nature of the salvation proposed.—But perhaps some of you may object, that in the same chapter, Christ says, “ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” A little attention will show, that these words are perfectly consistent with the sentiments now advanced, and that they even confirm them.

What is meant by the Father’s *drawing* sinners to Christ ? Can we suppose any thing more is meant than giving a new heart or disposition ? If not, instead of opposing the idea, that there is nothing wanting in the sinner, but a disposition, it establishes it.

The only thing done to sinners, when they are drawn unto Christ, is rendering them willing or disposed to come ; of consequence, this is the only thing

wanting in any. The only difficulty lies in the sinner's heart. His heart is unholy—His affections are in a wrong direction—He has such a total want of inclination towards God, that he will not choose him for his portion. He sees no excellency—no form, or comeliness in the Saviour, and therefore desires him not.

The passages in which there is a free and indiscriminate offer of salvation, or invitation to sinners, to come to Christ, that they may have life, are numerous.

To what has been mentioned, I shall only add the following: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat: yea come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." "The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever *will* let him take of the water of life freely." The words of Christ are: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In the parable of the supper, recorded Luke 14th chapter, Christ teaches us that all, who hear the gospel, are invited to come to him and have life, and that if any do not come, it is not from a *natural inability*, but a criminal *disinclination*.

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servants at supper time, to say to them who were bidden, come, for all things are ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse." Then the master of the house was angry, and resolved that none of them should taste of his supper. The idea conveyed is, that those men who were bidden were able to come to the feast if they had been disposed; of course, we are taught, that all under the gospel may come to Christ, the invitation being to all who hear the gospel; and that if any do not come, it is solely from the want of a disposition; they have no inability except a moral inability—the

want of a heart. That the gospel invites all to come to Christ, and have life, or, which is the same thing, makes a free and impartial offer of salvation to all who hear it, appears not only from the plain meaning of scriptural expressions used for that purpose, but from this important fact, that men, considered as rational and moral beings, without respect to their temper of heart, are fully capable of accepting the blessings proposed. Were not this true, no offer of salvation would be properly made to fallen man.

Nothing is offered fairly to any man, in whom something more is needful to his accepting of it, than a willingness to accept in view of its true nature. Nor is the case altered at all, by men's natural unwillingness, or disapprobation of the nature and plan of the gospel. If we admit that men are wholly opposed to the gospel, and will continue so, till their hearts are renewed in a day of God's power, still it is true, that unwillingness or opposition of heart is the only obstacle. And if men are ever found guilty, at the tribunal of conscience, or the tribunal of God, it will be, not for the want of natural ability (which would excuse them) but for the want of a willing mind. I pass in the

III. Place, to consider, in a brief manner, the good proposed and to be enjoyed, by all who truly come to the Saviour.

“Him that cometh to me,” says the Saviour, “I will in no wise cast out;” i. e. I will certainly receive him, and bestow upon him eternal life and blessedness. He says, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.” The good proposed in the gospel, to which sinners are invited, Christ has compared, in a parable, to a feast consisting of a rich variety, and prepared at a great expense. We are therefore in the gospel invited, to a spiritual feast of good things, freely to partake and be filled. To receive through the merits of Christ, the pardon of sin, deliverance



from the power and dominion of it—peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and to enjoy a holy God, and a title to the heavenly inheritance. Such, in brief, is the good proposed, and which all who come to Christ will receive.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

And in the first place, I would remark, to prevent misconception, or a misimprovement of this subject, that the ideas advanced respecting the free offer of salvation to sinners—and there being nothing to prevent their receiving it, but their own unwillingness, so that the matter will be decided by their own free choice, are perfectly consistent with their absolute dependence, and the necessity of divine influence. Perhaps some may consider these as inconsistent, and it may be difficult to convince them to the contrary. It is always a difficult task to reconcile any of the doctrines of the gospel to the conceptions of unholy men. If any think to do this, so as to silence all their objections, they will meet with disappointment. The minds of impenitent sinners are greatly confused upon religious subjects; and for this there are sufficient reasons. The want of a careful, serious, prayerful attention to the holy scriptures, prevents their seeing the harmony of divine truth. The man, who would discover and embrace nothing but the pure doctrines of the gospel, must seriously and prayerfully examine the holy scripture. He must compare scripture with scripture. He must be honest and candid in his researches after truth. He must seek the truth, and be willing to receive it. But this the impenitent will not do. Hence their minds are commonly confused respecting the system of truth in the gospel. They frequently consider them as irreconcilable. They charge the ministers of the gospel with unsaying in one sermon, what they had said in another; and even contradicting themselves in the same discourse. It may be

that some ministers have been guilty of this, but not all who have been charged with it. Nothing more frequently occasions this charge, than holding up the doctrine contained in the foregoing discourse, that salvation is freely offered in the gospel; that sinners are free agents; and that there is no obstacle to their salvation but their own unwillingness to receive it; and at the same time intimating that sinners are absolutely dependent, and that there is a necessity of divine influence, in order to their salvation. How often do we hear it said, that our minister in one sermon teaches us that we are free agents—that salvation is freely offered to us, and that our eternal state will be decided according to the free choice which we make; and yet in the next contradicts himself, by teaching the necessity of divine influence; that we must be born again; and that the salvation of sinners, under the gospel, depends on the sovereign pleasure of God. Some, when speaking of these supposed contradictions, seem unable to contain themselves; they break out in a passion, as if it were not to be endured, that the minds of people should be perplexed, troubled, and discouraged with such absurdities and contradictions; not considering that all the absurdity or contradiction is in their own minds, and arises from the want of a humble, careful, and candid attention to the subject, in the light of scripture. What contradiction is there in saying, that sinners have salvation freely offered to them? or, that they are freely invited to come to Christ, and that nothing prevents their coming and receiving salvation but their own unwillingness; and yet saying that this unwillingness or opposition of heart to Christ, is so strong that nothing will overcome it but the power of God, renewing their hearts—thereby drawing them, or causing them to be willing in the day of his power? Or, on the other hand, where is the inconsistency of saying, that the divine influence is necessary to draw men to Christ, or make them willing in

the day of his power, and saying also, that sinners may come to Christ if they will, that they are under no natural inability, and that the only obstacle is opposition of heart? If nothing more is done in a day of divine power, when a sinner is drawn to Christ, than to remove his opposition of heart, and give him a willing mind, then it is evident that nothing else is wanting in the sinner, but a willing mind. And yet it may be true, as is indeed taught in the scriptures, that he will continue to want this, that is, continue voluntarily opposed to coming to Christ, till humbled and renewed by divine power. Such according to scripture is the moral depravity of sinners, that if left to themselves, they will never come unto Christ that they may have life, though under no natural inability. However capable they may be, considered as rational and moral beings, of coming to Christ, and of complying with the conditions of salvation, yet there is not such an heart in them. Hence the necessity of a merciful, divine influence, and the perfect consistence of this with the doctrine of a free offer of salvation to sinners, and their criminality in refusing to accept it.

2. From what has been said on this subject, we see that God may be true and sincere in the invitations of the gospel, though he sees that many will not comply, but will reject the offered mercy and perish. Some have professed to find difficulty in seeing this. But if, indeed, in the case of those who perish, the reason of their not accepting of the offered salvation, and the only reason fairly assignable by them be, as we have shewn their unwillingness, surely the offer may be as sincere and benevolent as if it were accepted. It would be unreasonable to suppose that, in order to be sincere in offering a favor to any person, we must know that he will receive it. It is sufficient if we offer it upon conditions, which he has natural power to perform.

Neither is it necessary to sincerity of offer, that we should use any special means to render him willing to receive it, were we able. It is sufficient, if we design to fulfil our part of the engagement, in every instance where the condition is complied with. In respect to the invitations of the gospel, they may be considered as stating to sinners their duty, with the consequences of their performing or neglecting.—God may invite and command sinners to come to Christ, and submit themselves to him, because it is their duty so to do ; and may state to them in the fullest manner the danger of refusing, and the happy consequences of complying ; nor can the divine sincerity in such a statement be affected one way or the other, by the conduct of those to whom it is made. Christ may be as true and sincere, in the declaration, “ him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,” though he knows but a few will come, as if he supposed that many or that all would do it. It is sufficient, if it be his real design, to make good his promise, by receiving all who actually come.

But it is enquired by some, what advantage is there in offering salvation to all, unless it be designed to bring them to a compliance ? I answer : if we could conceive of no advantage in it, still, as God actually does it, and commands it to be done in the preaching of the gospel, it would become us to presume, that there are reasons, arising from the nature of the divine government, and to doubt of it would be impiously charging God with folly. But there are very obvious and important reasons why the offer of salvation should not be confined to the elect, but should extend to all under the gospel. I will mention a few.

First, Those who will comply with the invitations of the gospel, being appointed in the counsels of God, to be made willing in the day of his power, live promiscuously with others, and cannot be known by men, till they are distinguished by an actual compli-

ance. The gospel therefore cannot be preached to them, unless it be preached to all. But it is important that it should be preached to them, and that in connection with others, being addressed indiscriminately, that it may appear, that they are naturally no more disposed to comply than others; and that there is no difference, till they are made to differ by efficacious grace. And this will appear the more strikingly to them, and the sovereignty of divine grace, by which they are distinguished, be the more realized, when they see others under the same advantages with themselves, living and dying in a rejection of the gospel, and bringing on themselves an aggravated ruin. Thus they see what themselves would have been, had they not been distinguished by sovereign grace, and made willing in the day of divine power. Thus they learn more of themselves, of creatures, and of God; and are thereby prepared to be more humble, and more animated in their praise of sovereign grace.

Secondly, In consequence of the offer of salvation to those who perish, they are left without any cloak for their sin; they will be peculiarly without excuse, and the justice of God, in their destruction, will be on that account the more conspicuous. It will appear by this, that mankind are so fixed in their rebellion, are such obstinate opposers and enemies of God, and his holy kingdom, that they are disposed constantly, and with all their hearts, to reject mercy and salvation, though freely offered to them through Christ. This will bring to the view of creatures the true nature of sin, the exceeding wickedness and obstinacy of the hearts of mankind, and evince the justice and propriety of the awful sentence pronounced upon the wicked at the great day. It will evince also, that the destruction of those who perish under the gospel is of themselves, that nothing could have prevented their salvation, and brought destruction upon them—no decree of heaven—nor Satan—nor any of



their fellow men—nor any outward circumstances and temptations of this world, had they not with all their hearts rejected the gospel, and constantly refused to accept the salvation which was offered to them, for which sin and folly there cannot be the least possible excuse. They will therefore be condemned in their own consciences, and God will be gloriously just. We must add also, that in this way, the love of God, or his goodness in giving his Son to die for mankind, will appear more wonderful. The love of God is especially commended in giving his Son to die for men, while they were yet sinners; and it appears great and marvellous in proportion to the unworthiness of the beings towards whom it is exercised.

But the unworthiness and vileness of mankind, and the desperately evil nature of sin, appear no where, with such palpable and glorious evidence, as in men's finally rejecting Christ and his salvation.

It must have been great love in God to give his Son, had he seen that men would receive him as their Prince and Saviour with one consent. But how much more astonishing is that love and grace, which could provide a Saviour of infinite dignity and worthiness, for beings, who were seen to be such monsters of pride and ingratitude, as to treat him with scorn and contempt.

3. If the offers of the gospel are indiscriminate and free; if sinners are under no natural inability to come to Christ, then they are proper subjects of exhortation and command. And it is fit and proper that the ministers of the gospel should state to them their duty, as they are commanded to do—with the consequence of complying or refusing—and that whether they will hear or forbear. I shall therefore, as proper in the improvement of this subject, address directly to all present the invitation of the gospel. The invitation of Christ is, "Come unto me,"



and he declares in our text, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The invitation is to all present. It is to those of you, my hearers, who love the Lord in sincerity, and who have come unto him. The invitation to such is to continue coming. To come unto him at all times, trusting in him and casting your cares upon him. It is to you, if such there be, who are convinced of your sin and guilt, and of your danger of endless ruin, and are disposed to enquire, what you must do to be saved. To such the reply or direction of Christ in the gospel is, "Come unto me"—"I am the way the truth and the life." "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Even to those of you also, who are careless and stupid, is the invitation addressed, to you who make a mock of sin, who cast off fear, and restrain prayer—who treat with neglect and contempt the word and ordinances of God—profane his sabbaths—blaspheme his name—ridicule and despise his followers, and who have all your lives, been saying by your practice, "Who is the Lord that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" To you (amazing condescension and forbearance!) is the invitation repeated, this day, by God, in the gospel of his Son—to turn to the Lord and enjoy the greatest good—to come unto Christ that ye may have life. It is your duty to come—nor is there any thing to prevent, but your wicked opposition of heart. If you come unto him, in the manner which has been described, you shall have life; if not, an aggravated destruction. Whether you will now hear and consider, is known to God only. It may be, that he has designed that you should have the invitation of the gospel set before you this day, and that you should be left to yourselves under it, left to an increased degree of hardness and guilt. Or it may be, that he will accompany it with the energy of his spirit, to impress upon you a sense of your danger

—and bring you to a sweet submission to the way of salvation by his Son.

But this is certain, that whether you hear or forbear, God will be just and glorious. And if you perish, it will appear that it was not through a natural inability to come to Christ ; but from inexcusable wickedness in slighting him, and neglecting the great salvation.

To conclude, let all who have truly come to Christ, feel your dependence and obligations—adore the grace that inclined you to come, that made you willing in the day of God's power ; and that made you welcome in the day of his wonderful mercy.

“ 'Twas the same Lord that spread the *feast*  
That sweetly forc'd us in ;  
Else we had still refus'd to taste  
And perished in our sin.”

Let all who have come to Christ, continue coming, and in this way make their calling and election sure. And in a little time, they shall come unto him in the most glorious manner—faith shall be changed into sight, and hope into full fruition. For this is his intercession before the Father, for all them who have come unto him—that they may be with him where he is, and behold his glory. Amen.



---

## SERMON XXI.

NEARNESS TO GOD THE SAINT'S DESIRE AND HAPPINESS.

---

JOB XXIII. 3, 4.

*Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.*

THE joys and the sorrows of the children of God are peculiar to themselves. They are such as the world knows nothing of. Though intermixed with the world, and subject to the same temporal calamities and disappointments with the rest of mankind, yet they have a joy in God, and in the things of religion, which the world can neither give nor take away. They have joy and peace in believing; not merely in the reflection that they do believe, and are the children of God, and so in a safe state: this they may have, but not rationally, till after they have had joy in the act of believing, and with an eye of faith have perceived the excellency of the divine character, and are pleased and satisfied with it. "In whom," says the apostle, that is, in God the Saviour, "though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." They rejoice and are raised above the world, in believing and in beholding and contemplating the divine character. It is the

language of their hearts, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee." Their sorrows also are peculiar.

Those things, which give sorrow and affliction to the children of God, very frequently give joy to the world, or at least do not affect them with any uneasy sensations. And the reason of this is, their supreme affections are placed on different objects; their taste is different, they relish objects of a different nature. The children of God, viewing the character of God as amiable, and his law holy, just and good, cannot but view sin as odious, and finding such remains of it in their own hearts, finding the law of sin and death warring againstt he law of their minds, it causes them continual sorrow of heart: they sorrow after a godly sort. But this is a sorrow with which the world, with which sinners are as much unacquainted, as they are with the joys and satisfactions which the children of God have, and which they derive from the contemplation of God, and the exercise of the Christian graces. Sin is so far from being their burden, and their sorrow, that it is their delight; they pursue it with greediness, and have no desire or relish for any other happiness, but what they derive from sinful courses. Another source of sorrow and affliction peculiar to the children of God, is the hiding of God's face; being deprived of the light of his countenance. The world, as they have no relish for holiness, and take no pleasure in spiritual and divine things; so it gives them no pain nor sorrow, to be far from God; or deprived of spiritual intercourse and communion with him. But to Christians, or the true children of God, there cannot in their view, a greater and more afflicting evil happen. That there is such a thing as God's withdrawing himself, in a measure, from Christians, leaving them for a season, to much coldness, barrenness, and darkness, I conclude has been proved by the experience of all of you who are Christians indeed. As this is a state of imperfection, as

the children of God are sanctified but in part, and being surrounded by the temptations and allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil, they frequently fall into sin, and thereby quench the spirit, and act unworthy of their high calling. The consequence is, God sometimes sends temporal calamities upon them as trials and chastisements, and frequently great spiritual darkness, so that the pains of hell, as it were, get hold upon them, and they find trouble and sorrow. This was the case with God's children, the saints of old. David, the man after God's own heart, frequently experienced not only great temporal calamities, but spiritual darkness, and bitter sorrows and affliction of soul, under the hidings of God's face. "The sorrows of death" says he, "compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me : I found trouble and sorrow." And again, Psalm lxxvii. "My soul refused to be comforted, I remembered God, and was troubled." That is, troubled at the thoughts of his righteous frowns : "I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest my eyes waking : I am so troubled that I cannot speak ;" that is, cannot pray or get near the throne. "I have considered the days of old ; the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night : " that is, I have reflected upon the times when enjoying the light of God's countenance, I have had sweet access to him by prayer, and communion with him : when even the silent watches of the night were witness to the joy and praise of my heart, and the satisfaction I had in contemplating upon God, more than in the rest of sleep. "I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search ;" that is, diligent enquiry into the reason of this darkness and the withdrawing of God's spirit. "Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favorable no more ? Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? Doth his promise fail forevermore ?" In many such instances, does the Psalmist and others, as recorded in sacred scripture, complain of seasons



of darkness and sorrow, expressed by being absent from God, or deprived of the light of his countenance. And this was eminently the situation of holy Job, at the time when he spake the words of the text. For the trial of his faith and patience, and to display the goodness and faithfulness of God, he was visited with great afflictions and temptations. Under these he complained or mourned ; but did not mourn to excess, nor murmur against God. As he says in the verse preceding the text, “ Even to day is my complaint bitter : my stroke is heavier than my groaning ; ” that is, though my complaint is bitter, and my groaning great, yet not greater than my stroke ; not greater than might be expected, from a frail worm, under such complicated affliction : as in Chapter vi. 2. “ Oh, that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together ! For it would be heavier than the sand of the sea. Therefore are my words swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty ” says he, Chapter vi. 4. “ are within me, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.”

A principal part of Job’s sorrow and distress of soul arose from the thought, that God had a controversy, and had in a great measure withdrawn from him his favorable presence. He could not find that communion with God, and that nearness of access to him by prayer, which he wished, and which at times he had enjoyed. Yea, he complains in the context, that he could not have that realizing sense of God’s working, in all things, and of the hand of God being in all his afflictions, which he ought to have. And even that he could not have that sense of God’s omniscience and omnipresence which he desired ; but was as one wholly left of God : and though possessed of a desire, yet unable to approach him. “ Behold,” says he, “ I go forward, but he is not there : backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him : he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot

see him." In this situation he exclaims, as in the text, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might approach even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." We may make from the words this

DOCTRINAL REMARK.

It is the great desire of the children of God, at all times, and especially under straits and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual, to get near to God and pour out their hearts before him. For the proof of this proposition, I need only appeal to the consciences and experience of the children of God, and adduce a few testimonies from scripture, or instances in which it was verified. This was the desire of David in all his afflictions. He looked to God alone for help, and seemed to delight in nothing more than to follow after God, and to be able to pour out his heart in prayer and supplication. How evidently does this appear in the hundred forty-third Psalm. "My soul followeth hard after thee, O God. I stretch forth my hands to thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Hear me speedily, O Lord, for my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down to the pit." And in Psalm cxlii. how plain is it, that all his desires and comfort in trouble, were in getting near to God, and pouring out his heart before him. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice. I poured out my complaint before him. Then my spirit was overwhelmed within me. I shewed before him my trouble. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge and my portion, in the land of the living." The same thing appears also in the example and conduct of Job. As for me, says he, is my complaint to man? i. e. Do I look to miserable mortals like myself, for support and consolation, when my soul is filled with sorrow and trouble, under affliction, and the hidings of God's face? "Miserable

comforters are they all." And further on, "My friends, says he, scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor;" referring here undoubtedly, to the mediator, through whose mediation and intercession, alone, he expected access to God, and the throne of grace.

Again, as in the text, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." The idea is, that he would plead before God with a holy, submissive boldness; not his own merit, for, as he had said, in chapter ix. vr. 2. "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him he cannot answer him one of a thousand." But he would plead before him, with a humble boldness, the riches of his grace. According to the exhortation of the apostle, Heb. iv. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." These examples of the conduct and desires of the saints of old, when under trials, as well as the experience of all Christians, establish the truth of the doctrine, *that it is the great desire of the children of God, at all times, and especially under straits and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual, to get near to him, that they may pour out their hearts before him.* But in order more fully to illustrate and improve the subject it may be proper,

I. To show briefly what we are to understand by getting near to God, or enjoying his presence.

II. The happiness of those who enjoy this nearness, or who, according to the desire of Job, know where to find him, and are enabled to approach even to his seat. And

III. What prevents Christians from enjoying this nearness to, or favorable presence of God, at all times.

I. Then, what are we to understand by getting near to God, or enjoying his presence? And here, I would observe, that the presence of God—approaching his presence—having the light of his countenance, &c. as also, the absence of God, withdrawing himself from us, hiding his face, and the like, are figurative expressions, and spoken after the manner of men.

1. The presence of God, when understood in one sense, must refer to his omnipresence; which is a necessary perfection of his nature. But, when used in this sense, it would be absurd to speak of coming near to God, or approaching his presence; or, of being absent from him. For he is necessarily in all things, and pervades all things. Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. The Psalmist also acknowledged and enquired, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand hold me.” But,

2. There is another sense, in which we speak of the presence of God, and may figuratively speak of approaching his presence; that is, when we reflect upon him, and address ourselves to him: whereby he becomes present to our minds. Thus, when we enter the house of God, and attend on public worship, or when we attempt to address him in prayer, whether public or private, we are said to be in, or come into his more immediate presence.

Again, by the presence of God, and enjoying his presence, we sometimes understand the goodness of God, or rather the communications of divine goodness. Whatever is a real good comes from God. And all who receive any good from God, do enjoy just so much of the divine presence and favor. But further, there is a still higher and peculiar sense, in which the children of God do frequently and constantly desire to enjoy his presence, to which I now chiefly refer. They not only receive natural or temporal good, at the hand of God, which is common both to the just and unjust ; but they enjoy communications of moral and spiritual good. God gives his spirit to dwell in them, divinely illuminating their minds, enabling them to hold spiritual communion or intercourse with him, to perceive the true character of God, and the beauty and propriety of the divine conduct ; which perception gives joy and consolation, and raises above the world. This is to have the light of God's countenance, to enjoy his presence, and be near to him. The spirit of God, dwelling within them, quickens and animates their affections, by his enlivening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, and gives them joy and peace in believing, He also gives them utterance, and enables them to pour out their hearts in prayer and praise to God, under all circumstances, in the most easy, affectionate, and submissive manner. The moment of the nearest access of mortals to God in this life, is when employed in spiritual prayer and praise, and this is their resort under afflictions and trials. They order their cause before God, and fill their mouths with arguments. And when they have wandered from God, neglected duty, and fallen into sin, so that to chastise them, God takes from them the light of his countenance, or withholds, in a great measure, the influences of his spirit, leaving them to grope in the dark, and greatly to decline in the spirit and grace of prayer ; then it is, that having once tasted that the



Lord is good, they are ready to exclaim with Job, "Oh, that I were as in months past ! Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat !" In a word, by getting near to God, or finding him, and coming even to his seat, as expressed in the text, we are to understand getting into that state or frame of soul, in which we have a realizing sense of God's all-surrounding presence, and of his working in all things ; in which we receive special influences of God's spirit, animating our affections and illuminating our hearts, to perceive the excellency and fulness of God, and giving us the spirit and grace of prayer, whereby we may with humble boldness address the throne of grace, take delight in pleading for the advancement of his own cause, and interest in the world ; and with the most cheerful recumbency of soul, rest upon him, and commit ourselves, and all our concerns, to his direction. I proceed

II. To speak of the happiness of those who enjoy this nearness to God, and have free access to the throne of grace ; or who, according to the desire of Job, know where to find him, when under afflictions and trials, and are enabled to approach even to his seat.

Under this head, it will be necessary to offer but little. For that there is a sublime satisfaction and happiness, which the world can neither give nor take away, that there is something which is inexpressible something which may be called a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, in approaching to God—in being near to him, as described above, and enabled to pour out the heart before him—will be denied by none, who have experience in the divine life ; and as to those who have not—who have no relish for communion with God, but say in their heart, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways—it is expected that such, notwithstanding any description



which may be given, will “despise, and wonder, and perish,” unless God of his mercy shall shine into their hearts. But I would observe briefly,

1. That the joy and consolation there is in being near to God, and having a sense of his presence and fulness, and the lively exercise of love to him, is an ample support, under the greatest worldly afflictions, and is the foundation of that desire, which there is in all the children of God to get near him, in their trials. The heart never feels such unspeakable peace, as when holding communion with God, and when its affections go out towards the supreme beauty. How good men of old, under the greatest straits, used to break out in strains of rapture ! “I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.” “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O Lord. My soul thirsteth for thee. My flesh longeth for thee, in a dry land wherein is no water ; that I may see thy glory as I have seen it in the sanctuary.” “Lo ! they that are far from thee perish ; but it is good for me to draw near to God. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.” There are but few days, yea there is no day in mortal life, in which we do not stand in need of consolation, above what the world can afford. Ever since sin entered our world, mankind have been subject to sorrows and afflictions, under which they need the supports of religion—under which they need the smiles and presence of God, and here indeed there is at all times consolation. In the pavilion of his presence God will hide his children, in the time of trouble, in the secret of his tabernacle he will cover them, in the day of danger. Surely no Christian while thus near to God, and pouring out his heart before him, with the true spirit and grace of prayer, ever feared what men could do to him, or cared greatly about this world. It is some consolation to

the children of God, to open their hearts to one another, and to tell their sorrows to a friend who can give no relief, except by sympathising with them. What consolation, what relief then must it give to get near to, and pour out their hearts before him, who is a friend, both gracious to hear, and mighty to save ; and who has pledged his perfections, that all things shall co-operate for their good ! But,

2. That there is great joy and happiness in that peculiar nearness to God, which Christians do sometimes, yea, frequently enjoy, expressed by finding him, and coming even to his seat, and that it is an attainment greatly desirable, is evident from the consideration, that it is of the same nature, as the happiness of heaven—yea, that it is heaven begun in the souls even in this life. When we speak of departed saints, we say, they are in heaven—in the immediate and glorious presence of God ; and that their happiness consists in the enjoyment of this presence—in seeing God, and becoming like him. But this enjoyment of God's presence, though inconceivable in degree, yet cannot be different in kind, from that vouchsafed to the children of God on earth. He holds communion with them here, and grants them something of that nearness of access to him, that favorable presence, which, when granted in full, beyond the veil, will give fulness of joy. Christians by being near to God, ever maintaining a close and holy walk with him, become more and more transformed into the divine likeness, and more and more fitted for heaven—yea, in the lively performance of humble adoration and praise, they do anticipate the employment of heaven, and join, as it were, beforehand, the society of the blessed. Having endeavored to point out the nature and blessedness of that nearness to God, so much prized by holy Job, under his afflictions ; and which the children of God do frequently enjoy, I proceed,

III. To point out briefly, what prevents Christians from enjoying nearness to God, or his favorable presence, at all times.

It has already been shewn, by an appeal to the experience of Christians, and the testimony of scripture examples, that the children of God are often in the dark, deprived of the light of God's countenance, and unable to get near the throne of grace in prayer; and that this is the reason of their crying out frequently, with Job, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat."! Now to the question, what can be the occasion of this token of the divine displeasure, which to the Christian is a sore affliction? the answer, in general, is, it is sin—remaining corruption in the heart, especially as acted out in gratifying the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, whereby the Holy Spirit is quenched, and provoked in a great measure to depart. The sanctification of the heart is the work of the Spirit freeing it, more and more, from corruption, but it is effected in the use of means and endeavors on the part of the subject. Hence it is, that Christians are exhorted to a diligent and constant attention to the means of grace—to attend upon the word of God written and preached—to pray without ceasing—to watch unto prayer—to strive to enter in at the strait gate, or to agonize the holy agony, conflicting with the lusts which war against the soul, and in general, in the use of all appointed means, with an humble dependence on God, to fight the good fight of faith. Abiding in this course, they may hope for the co-operation of the Spirit of God. But departing from it, in neglecting the use of means, and in suffering their thoughts to be engrossed with the world and its amusements, they quench the Spirit, which otherwise would be like an holy flame abiding in their hearts, cherishing the love of God, exciting a fervent zeal for his glory, and giving them a blessed nearness to God and communion with him.

Particularly, one great means of quenching the Spirit, and consequently of depriving Christians of the light of God's countenance, is neglect of prayer. Prayer is to the soul what breath is to the body, it is the Christian's life : and no true Christian will live long without it. Yet it too often happens, that through a criminal coldness, induced by worldly cares, Satan gets an advantage over the children of God, and influences them to put off stated seasons of prayer, either till a more convenient time, or till they may acquire a better frame ; and in so doing, they quench the Spirit, and provoke God, for their chastisement, to leave them to wander, for a time, in the dark, seeking in vain to obtain the light of his countenance.

Another thing which has a very special tendency to quench the Spirit, and prevent that nearness to God, which is the Christian's desire and duty, is too great an attention to the cares and business of the world. This indeed is the source of many other sins, such as a languid, or a ruffled and discomposed frame in prayer, or in the discharge of any other duty. It is a sin however, that in most cases, very easily besets Christians. They are apt to excuse themselves in an undue attachment to the world, by giving it the name of prudence, industry, and an endeavor to shun the sin of those who are worse than infidels, in neglecting to provide for their own households. Nothing, however, more than an undue attachment to the world and its enjoyments, or solicitude about its concerns, is opposed to communion with God ; and in the indulgence of this temper, the Christian, who ought to rise above the world, and to have his treasure, and his heart and conversation in heaven, will appear to degenerate into the man who is of the earth, earthy. I might enumerate other particulars, such as neglecting religious conversation and serious reflection, indulging in anger, wrath, malice, intemperance, &c. all which have a direct tendency to quench the Spirit, and to interrupt communion with God. Suffice it

to say, that remaining indwelling sin, in itself, and as it appears in external act, by remissness in duty, inattention to means, and positive sinful indulgence, is that alone which prevents Christians enjoying, at all times, that peculiar nearness to God, and communion with him, which have been described.

Let the children of God, therefore, under all darkness and affliction, be humble, taking all blame to themselves: Let them seek, in God's appointed way, still further degrees of holiness both in heart and life: For it is sin only, which brings darkness upon them; it is this only which intercepts the beatific vision of God's face. God does not willingly afflict and grieve either his own children, or the children of men.

Thus I have endeavored, briefly, to describe the nature and blessedness of that peculiar nearness to God, so much desired by Job in the text, and by all the children of God, and pointed out the reason of their not enjoying it, at all times. I shall close with a brief

#### IMPROVEMENT.

And from what has been said, let Christians be induced to aspire, more and more, after communion with God, and to obtain that nearness to him, that light of his countenance, which alone can support, and give consolation, and afford a happiness, worthy a rational and immortal soul. And in order to this, let them be persuaded to attend diligently upon all the means of grace, looking to God for assistance; and especially endeavor to take off their affections, more and more, from the world, and to let their lives be hid with Christ in God. For they who are Christians ought to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

Christians! you live in a troublesome world; you sojourn in a vale of tears. But you have the support of religion—you have a covenant God, to ap-



proach, and so long as you are in the lively exercise of love to God, so long as you maintain a close walk with God, and keep near the throne of grace, you will rise above the frowns and flatteries of the world, and will reckon that the sufferings, and afflictions of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed, in God's heavenly presence. But the great danger is, you live in an ensnaring world ; you are sanctified but in part ; Satan has much ground to work upon, and he has many devices. Hence there is danger of being in a measure led astray from God ; allured into such practices as will quench the spirit, and wound your own souls. Therefore watch, and be sober. " Be strong, only in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

" Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For ye wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." " Wherefore take unto yourselves the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." And as a motive, remember that he that endureth to the end shall be saved—saved from all sorrow and affliction—from all temptation and imperfection—from all darkness, and admitted to enjoy the presence of God, in a more glorious manner, than heart can conceive. If you delight in God's presence here, if you delight to draw near to him, in his ordinances, and in prayer, and praise, what fulness of joy will you have in his heavenly presence, and in the worship of heaven ! So great is it, that the most perfect sense and enjoyment which any have of God's presence and favor, while at home in the body, is called, *being absent from the Lord*. And let all remember, and especially aged Christians, that they soon must be absent from the body, and ought to keep their lights trimmed and burning, since they know not when their Lord will call.



The king of terrors is constantly doing his work. How many of your Christian friends and acquaintance, "with whom you used to take sweet counsel together, and go up to the house of God in company," have gone before you—gone from all sin, sorrow, and darkness, to him who is "light, and in whom is no darkness at all."

They are now near him indeed—and can go even to his seat, and fill their mouths with arguments. Not such arguments however, as we are wont to use in this militant state ; they have no temptations now to disturb them—no darkness to be removed—no sinful imperfections to mourn ; but adoration and praise—with joy unspeakable, is now their employment. "For in his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for ever more."

To conclude. Let us remember, one and all, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And that those of us who take no delight in religion, nor in drawing near to God, by prayer, in public and in private, can never meet him in peace, without a change of affections.

The heavenly presence of God will be enjoyed by none, but those who can adopt the language of the Psalmist ; and God grant that it may be the language of all our hearts :

"Were I in heaven without my God,

" 'Twould be no joy to me ;

" And while this earth is my abode,

" I long for none but thee.

" This life's a dream an empty show,

" But the bright world to which I go,

" Hath joys substantial and sincere,

" When shall I wake and find me there !"

---

## SERMON XXII.

### IMPORTANCE OF HEARING CHRIST'S VOICE IMMEDIATELY.

---

#### HEBREWS III. 15.

*To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

**T**IME is the gift of God, and the man of true wisdom will improve the present, by securing an interest in Christ, and laying a foundation for a happy futurity. The salvation of the gospel is of such infinite importance, and delays respecting it are so dangerous, that no possible excuse can justify the sinner in neglecting it a single moment.

The term of probation is a precious talent, purchased by the blood of Christ, and no part of it therefore may be spent, before we honor him by hearkening to his voice, and complying with his gracious proposals. Hence, the Holy Ghost says in the text, "*To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*" But let us attend a moment to the connection.

The apostle in the context speaks of three important things, with particular application to his hearers.

*The voice of Christ—the sin of unbelief, or hardening the heart against his voice, and the consequence of this, falling short of the rest of God. God's rest is spoken of in three senses : The rest of the seventh day : The rest of the land of Canaan, promised to all the faithful Israelites who came out of Egypt ; and the rest of the heavenly Canaan, of which the Christian sabbath is, to the believer, a foretaste.*

The earthly Canaan was an eminent type of the heavenly. From this, many of the Israelites were cut off, and fell in the wilderness, God having sworn in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. The occasion of this the apostle informs us, was their unbelief, or hardening their hearts against the voice of Christ. And that this also, if continued in, will be sufficient to cut off from the heavenly rest.

*The voice, against which it is represented that mankind harden their hearts, is the voice of God in his revealed word, the voice of Christ the great head of the church, by which he hath been addressing mankind ever since the fall. All the invitations and warnings, which have ever been addressed to sinners, are the voice of Christ to them. In the antediluvian world he addressed them by Enoch, who prophesied the destruction of the wicked ; and by Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and preached by the Spirit of Christ to the spirits that are now in prison. Afterwards he spake by his servants Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, and the prophets ; and last of all, in his own person on earth, and by his apostles ; whose words are recorded, and at his command repeated and enforced by his ambassadors, the ministers of the gospel.*

To enforce the importance of hearing Christ's voice, the apostle cites the words of David in the xcv. Psalm, when under divine inspiration, he reasoned with the then present generation, and warned them against delaying repentance ; and hardening their heart against the voice of Christ, as did their

fathers, for which they fell in the wilderness, as verse 7, and on. "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation, in the wilderness, when your fathers proved me and tempted me, and saw my works forty years.—Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, &c. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." This the apostle, in the next verse, applies to his brethren by way of caution: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of *you*, an evil heart of unbelief." And then repeating the words of the Psalmist, he expressly addresses them to all who shall hear his words, as in the text: "While it is said *to day*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." He would, if possible, engage all, instantly to improve the offered salvation, nor does he fail to warn them of the danger of refusing; the awful danger which threatens those who harden their hearts, and stand all the day idle, while the golden sands of the gospel are running out, and the glass of probation never to be turned up again.

The address, my hearers, is as much to us, as to those to whom the apostle originally wrote.—To all under the gospel dispensation, Christ's voice is peculiarly addressed: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the children of men. Come, for all things are *now ready*, now is the accepted time;" *to day*, i. e. *now immediately*, "to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

From the text, therefore, we may raise this *doctrine*, *It is the immediate duty of sinners, to hear the voice of Christ, and comply with his gracious proposals.*

I shall endeavor to establish this truth, by several considerations. And, my hearers, while I have your ears, your attention, I hope Christ will have your hearts, for he is richly worthy your first, your highest affections.

If the idea in the doctrine is not sufficiently clear, the explanation of it is this : It is the duty of sinners to hear Christ's voice ; or, which is the same thing, to repent and believe immediately, before they do any thing else. The salvation of the gospel is of such a nature, that it demands our immediate acceptance. We violate the most sacred obligations, and run an infinite hazard, if we take another step, to the right hand or left, or even draw another breath, before we give away our hearts to Christ.

In support of the doctrine, thus explained, I shall offer the following considerations :

1. *The nature of the present offer of salvation.* By the voice of Christ in the gospel, salvation is now offered to sinners ; and for this reason, they ought immediately to accept of it.

If this be not the case—if sinners are not obligated to accept of Christ—to repent and believe immediately, but may put it off to the next moment, or the next hour, in order to do something by way of preparation, as some suppose they may and must—then it will follow, that were they to be cut off by death in the present hour or moment, and be summoned to the bar of God, they might there plead not guilty for the neglect of salvation, and their plea would be admitted by the Judge of quick and dead. For God is a reasonable being, and cannot condemn the innocent. But it is far otherwisc. Were every sinner who has hitherto neglected the offers of the gospel, to be immediately cut off—he would be wholly without excuse, and speechless before God. We are no where informed, in the gospel, that we may love the Lord Jesus Christ, and accept of his gracious proposals to morrow, and not to day. “ But to day if ye will hear his voice. Behold *now* is the accepted time.” It is therefore a plain, incontestible truth, that if sinners can ever be under obligation to accept the salvation, they are immediately without

the least delay. It seems too plain a case to need an illustration. The most inattentive sinner would be fully convinced, that the criminal at the bar of justice ought to accept of pardon from his judge, as soon as offered; and instantly to return his most cordial thanks. To delay a moment would enhance his crime, and greatly aggravate it. So were an indulgent father, who had been long dishonored by an undutiful child, to offer him forgiveness, the son would be under the strongest obligations to accept immediately, with humility and gratitude. But what are such instances of proffered pardon, in comparison with God's saying to the sinner, "Come, for all things are ready?" He is infinitely above the best earthly rulers and parents. His salvation, therefore, ought to be immediately accepted, because it is *now offered*. The nature of the present offer makes it a *present duty* to accept.

II. Another consideration which evinces, that it is the immediate duty of sinners to hear Christ's voice, and accept of the offered salvation, is that it is infinitely more excellent, than any thing else which can engage their present affections. Nothing can compare with the salvation of the gospel—it is superlatively excellent. It therefore not only demands our attention and affections, at some future period, but our *supreme* love and delight immediately. Hence Christ tells us to seek *first the kingdom* of God, and his righteousness. This is the pearl of great price. If any pearl could be found more valuable and precious than the gospel, then sinners would be wise in neglecting salvation to secure it. For it is a dictate of reason, that the most excellent things are to be preferred to all others. Every thing ought to be treated according to *truth*; i.e. according to its nature and importance. But what is there, which for excellence, can compare to the love of the gospel? When we think of the length, and breadth, and depth, and



height of the love of Christ, other things have no glory. There is nothing which can endure a momentary comparison with it. Hence the expressions of the heart that could never express such superior excellency : "Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the *things* which God hath prepared for those who love him." But in what does the superior excellence of the gospel salvation consist, which makes it the immediate duty of sinners to accept it, in preference to all other things ? The question is important, and may with propriety be briefly answered in this place.

1. One important excellence of the gospel salvation consists in the pleasure which ever accompanies the acceptance of it.

We are naturally at enmity with God, and destitute of any taste or relish for communion with him. Nor can we ever enjoy the sublime pleasure which the blessed God communicates to all his friends, till we hear Christ's voice, and comply with his gracious proposals.

The whole life of the sinner, before he comes to Christ, is but the life of the prodigal. He wastes his estate, abuses his time and talents, and starves his soul, in feeding upon the dry husks of the world. But no sooner is his heart touched with the feelings of divine friendship, and a disposition to give himself up to God in Christ, than he enjoys the most sublime happiness. Sinners labor under a very criminal mistake, when they conclude there is no pleasure in religion. The conclusion is so grossly false, that there is no pleasure worth enjoying without it. This every one who has experienced will testify. The Christian is the only man of true, rational pleasure and delight. And in proportion to the strength of his desires for conformity to Christ, he tastes of his

happiness, partakes of his nature, and enjoys his possessions : When the soul accepts of the salvation of the gospel, he then enjoys all the treasures of infinite goodness. He has nothing of his own, nor does he need any private interest, for he possesses the whole universe in common with Christ. They have but one interest and one joy. His heart is open to Christ, and Christ's heart and all his treasures are open to him. Their love is mutual and impartial, and so is their joy, for they are one. The true Christian is possessed of the friendship of the Father and the Son, and blessed with that inseparable love and communion which subsist between them. Hence the Saviour says, in that memorable prayer for his followers, " I pray for them, for they are thine, that they may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." To illustrate this happy union the apostle says, " We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And in another place, to express the mutual joy and sorrow between Christ and his followers, he says, " And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

In this near and intimate union between Christ and the soul, we have a view of what is implied in saving faith. For this is salvation from sin in the enjoyment of Christ. The soul who accepts of Christ as offered in the gospel, has found the secret place of the most high, and must, from the very nature of his union to Christ, abide under the shadow of the almighty. This in one word is his situation. He accepts of a salvation which was invented by infinite wisdom, which was purchased by infinite mercy, which is full of goodness, and *has been and ever will be*, defended by infinite power. I appeal therefore to

conscience, whether there be not sufficient excellency involved in the nature of accepting such a salvation, to make it the sinner's immediate duty ? What is there for which he may rationally delay the salvation of his soul a single moment ? Riches and honors are mere dust and shadows. The world is all deceit. One disappointment will take away all its pleasure ; but Christ is most precious and pleasant now, and the more he is loved the more excellent will he prove.

2. Another excellency of the salvation which is freely offered in the gospel, which renders it the duty of sinners to accept of it *immediately*, consists in its being a deliverance from the reigning power of sin. There is nothing with which mankind are naturally so deeply in love, as sin. They love sin so much, that they have no love to God, or one another. Sin reigns supreme in the heart of every natural man. To this we have the testimony of the apostle, in these words, " But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And again, " The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But though sinners are in love with sin, and roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue, yet let them be assured, that it is the most hateful thing in the universe, it is inconsistency itself. It opposes the general good, and will issue in the awful destruction of all who continue the impenitent subjects of it. The salvation therefore which is proclaimed and offered in the gospel, is most worthy our immediate acceptance, in order to be delivered from its reigning power. Strictly speaking, sin is the only evil in the universe. There is indeed much natural evil, yet this is the effect of sin. It was sin by which the angels fell, and for which they are bound under chains of endless despair. It was sin which destroyed the innocence

of the first parents of the human race, and has poisoned the heart of their whole posterity, and exposed them to everlasting destruction. But the evil-consequences of sin are innumerable and inconceivable. For when we reflect upon what it did in heaven—what it did in the garden of the Lord—what it did in the waters of the old world—in Sodom and Gomorrah—in Egypt—in the wilderness of Canaan—and what at the coming of Christ, and in his most bitter death—and what it has done through all the blood and flames of persecution, and when we read in prophecy what it will yet do, before and after the happy period of the millenium—and how universal nature will, at last, be set on fire by divine vengeance, to give the finishing stroke to the intolerable state of the wicked—when we have attended to all this, we have but the most imperfect view of the evil nature and consequences of sin. Sure there is no *excellence* in sin, though so sweet to the depraved hearts of mankind. It is most hateful—it has dishonored an infinitely holy God, and he will punish it according to its desert. What that punishment will be, I hope experience will never teach us. But this is certain that nothing will deliver from it, but a cordial acceptance of the salvation which is offered in the gospel.

Let sinners now remember how dishonorable sin is to the blessed God, and how much he is opposed to it—how destructive it is to the universe—and how injurious to their own souls. Let them reflect upon the multitude of their sins, and remember that they cannot enumerate one of a thousand; and yet for every sin they are exposed to endless banishment from the divine presence. Let them reflect also, that there is but one salvation from sin, and that salvation is now offered in the gospel. In view of these things, I would put the question seriously to conscience, “Is it not your immediate duty, to accept salvation—to hear Christ's voice to day, and turn to

him by true repentance, that you may be delivered from sin?" Be assured, my hearers, that if you would be prepared for death, and to meet your Judge in peace—if you would enjoy the excellence of that salvation which has been described, escape the evil of sin, and fly from the grand enemy of your souls; you must fly to *him*, who is the only strong hold—the Lord Jesus Christ. Let your feet, then, be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and take the shield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.

I proceed now in the

III. Place, to suggest another consideration, which is this, that "*delays are dangerous.*" Every moment which sinners delay and neglect to comply with the gracious proposals of Christ, they run an infinite hazard. And what is more, the longer they delay, the longer are they likely to delay. One delay is commonly preparatory to another, and that to a third; and so on, till it be for ever too late. This is the course of things in common life. The wise man thus describes it: "I went by the field of the sluggard, by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well, I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a *little sleep*, a *little slumber*, a *little folding* of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man." Such is the consequence of a slothful, delaying spirit, in the things of this life; and it is introduced by inspiration to show the danger and the consequence of a delaying spirit, in the things of religion. Delays, however, in things of religion, are infinitely more foolish and fatal than in any thing else. They are full of the most dangerous consequences to the soul. However inattentive delaying



sinners may be, to their impending danger, yet there is nothing more alarming. Their feet stand on slippery places. There is nothing but the mere mercy of God which prevents their plunging into endless despair; and he has said, their feet shall slide in due time. How unlikely is it, that sinners, who have habituated themselves to put off from day to day, will ever be ready to attend in earnest to religion! The gay and sprightly youth, if he thinks of religion at all, vainly concludes that he shall have a better opportunity to accept of Christ, when he gets through his present pursuits, and is settled in life. Therefore, he says to his complaining conscience, "Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will call for thee." But no sooner has he formed connections for life, and entered the middle stage, than he finds new cares, perplexities, and temptations press upon him, beyond what he had ever expected. And notwithstanding the need he has of religion to guide and support him, yet he says to his accusing conscience, "Depart for this time also, and at a more convenient season I will send for thee."— But as he began, so he continues. And when crowded on all sides by the perplexities of the world, and the difficulties of old age begin to look him in the face, he then says, even to the loudest claim of remaining conscience, "Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will certainly call for thee." Thus the delaying sinner often passes from childhood, through the bloom of youth, the *middle state*, and even to old age, where he should have nothing to do but to die in peace, violating the calls of conscience, till his hopeless eyes are closed in death, and it is for ever too late to accept of salvation.

It is not improbable that there are some present, at this time, who have begun, and perhaps for a long time been habituating themselves to such a course of procrastination, and even *now* are not ready to hearken to the voice of the divine Saviour. If there



are any such, I would put to them one serious question. Is it not probable that you will still conduct just as you have done? Is it not as likely that you will continue to neglect religion, as it was when you neglected it, *one, ten or twenty* years ago? If you have misimproved every opportunity you have enjoyed, and will not improve the *present*, what opportunity will you improve? If you say, to morrow, your past and present disinclination forbid the probability. "Therefore, seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; for now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." Besides, life is uncertain. To morrow is not yours. It may arrive, and it may not. You are promising yourselves a future period; but are you certain that the spirit of God, which does not always strive with sinners, is not now saying, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee," then whose shall be your intended to morrow?

But on the supposition your lives are to be continued, and the privileges of the gospel greatly multiplied, yet if you continue to neglect present duty, after so many invitations, is there not reason to fear that God will *seal you up* in hardness of heart. This has sometimes been the conduct of a righteous providence towards obstinate sinners. We have an instance of this nature, in that dreadful commission of the prophet Isaiah: "Go thou, and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not: Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed." And why have not delaying sinners, under the gospel, reason to fear that God will deal in the same manner with them? Surely they have: yet what more shocking except despair itself? How infinitely dangerous then is every moment's delay? For such reasons as these, God now commands men to accept salvation. It is an object infinitely

the most worthy of their present affections—and delays are dangerous, both on account of the uncertainty of life, and the provocation they are to God, to give sinners up to final judicial blindness.

I shall close with a brief.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. We learn what the duty of the ministers of the gospel is, with respect to giving directions to impenitent sinners. If it be the immediate and indispensable duty of sinners to repent, and accept of salvation ; then they ought to be directed to do this, before they do any thing else. They ought to be directed to that which, if observed, will certainly save their souls. But nothing will do this short of a cordial repentance and faith in Christ. The first and only direction of the gospel is, repent and believe. And it is declared that those who refuse shall be damned. If we, therefore, give the least encouragement to any thing short of this, and sinners receive and rest in it, they will perish ; but their blood will be required at our hands.

Sinners are dying men, and ought to be addressed as dying men ; as those whose probation may end the next moment. We must, therefore, direct them to repent immediately, and if they refuse, we must direct them again to repent immediately, and continue so to do as long as we have any opportunity to give directions. To tell sinners in one breath, that it is their immediate duty to seek first the kingdom of God, and in the next direct to something else, because they have no disposition to do this, is inconsistent and dangerous. It plainly supposes, that sinners are excusable for not repenting, or accepting salvation, so long as they have no disposition to do it. But if this were the case, they would for ever be excusable. The gospel, however, makes no allowance for opposition of heart. The call of it is, “ To

*day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Come, for all things are now ready."*

2. Let professors of religion examine themselves a moment on so important a subject. Have we hearkened to the voice of Christ, and accepted the great salvation which he proposes? Can we say that obedience to Christ, and communion with him, are our highest enjoyments? Do we hate sin as really as sinners love it? Have we given away our souls, and bodies, and friends, and estates, and all we possess, without reserve, to the disposal of Christ? Are we heartily engaged to redeem every moment of time, and to oppose every apparent delay? If so we have accepted salvation; and our faith will be known by love to Christ, and obedience to his commands.

Finally, Suffer me to conclude, by repeating and pressing the exhortation, upon all to hear the voice of Christ immediately, and comply with his gracious proposals. I would speak as a dying man to dying creatures. It is a solemn thought, that one and another, among the people of my charge, are almost daily finishing their course, and that I must soon meet you all at the bar of God, where a solemn account must be rendered for the directions which have been given, and the manner in which they have been received and observed. In faithfulness, therefore, to your souls and my own, I would press the exhortation, to hear Christ's voice this day—put not off from day to day, and year to year—delays are infinitely hazardous—you know not what a day may bring forth.—Besides, the salvation of the gospel is infinitely excellent—there is no true happiness to be enjoyed without it—it is therefore folly to seek happiness in any other thing.

Be exhorted, therefore, as dying creatures, to accept immediately of salvation. To day lend an ear to the voice of God—and “come, for all things are

*now* ready." Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. But if you will not, you must perish, there is no other alternative—Life and death are set before you—therefore choose life—choose the Saviour, for whosoever believeth in him shall live for ever.



---

## SERMON XXIII.

### ASSURANCE OF HOPE.

---

#### HEBREWS, VI. 11.

*And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*

THIS Epistle was written by St. Paul, to the whole body of his brethren among the Jews, who had professedly embraced Christianity. Many of them were much attached to the Mosaic law, and were in danger of apostatizing from Christ, through the subtilty of false and Judaizing teachers, and through the violent persecutions, which their unbelieving brethren stirred up against them. A principal design therefore of the apostle, in this letter, was to set forth the excellency and glory of the *gospel dispensation above the Mosaic*, in such a way as might establish the faith of true believers in it, without any mixture of the Mosaic observances; and encourage them to adhere to it faithfully and perseveringly, under all the difficulties and trials, which attended their profession of it—and as might also convince them of the awful danger and remediless situation of such as should apostatize.

His design plainly appears in the Chapter which contains the text. It begins thus, “ Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go



on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of the doctrine of baptisms," &c.

The design of the apostle here appears to be, to excite his brethren, to go on unto perfection, i. e. to make continual proficiency in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and of the gospel dispensation; and to give diligence, that they might be rooted, grounded, and built up in the truth, in order that they might be kept from apostacy. That this was the design of the apostle, is evident from his going on to set before them as a motive, the hopeless situation which they would be in should they, after having been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, &c. apostatize to Judaism or infidelity. "For" says he "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," i. e. of the gospel dispensation "if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

As this passage is connected with the text, it may be useful to pause here a moment, and consider its import. The opinions of commentators upon it have been various. Some have supposed, that in order to render it consistent with the doctrine of the certainty of the saint's perseverance, it must be considered as a description, not of the Christian character, but of something short of it, to which the unregenerate may attain, to which, if they once apostatize they will be no more renewed. But, it may be enquired, how is the supposition that the passage des-

cribes real Christians, inconsistent with the doctrine of the saint's certain perseverance. If it is inconsistent with the doctrine at all, it must be because cautions and warnings against apostacy, and exhortations to perseverance, are inconsistent with it. But these are not inconsistent with the doctrine; for though nothing is more certain from Scripture, than that all real Christians will finally persevere, yet they will not persevere without their own constant care, watchfulness, and exertion. Yea what is their perseverance in following the Lord, but the continuance of their exertions to follow him? At least it necessarily implies and includes these. But if watchfulness and exertions are necessary in Christians, it is proper to state the necessity of them—and to point out as a motive the consequences of failing to persevere. This statement, and the sense which it may give to Christians of the fearful consequences of apostacy, may be, and always are, among the means which God uses to accomplish his promise of causing them to persevere.

For illustration :

Paul, and the ship's company with him, when he was shipwrecked, had an absolute promise that they should all be saved from the death which threatened them. This promise however (as is the case with all other divine promises) connected the means with the end. Nor is it improper to say, that if *they had not attended to the means, they would have perished.*

Therefore, it was proper for Paul to warn the centurion and soldiers, as he did, that except the sailors abode in the ship they must all perish. And it was a sense of the certainty of this, which excited them to those exertions which prevented their perishing. It was before absolutely certain, and made *known to them*, that not *one of them* should perish. Yet it was absolutely certain, that their sense of the fatal consequences of suffering the sailors to leave the ship, and the exertions to which this roused them, were the

only means, or way in which the divine, immutable promise respecting their lives, was to be made good. And thus the divine promise, respecting the perseverance and salvation of all who are real Christians, which is immutable, is to be accomplished only by a sight of the danger and fatal consequences of apostacy, and that humble watchfulness and exertion which it excites in them. But if these things are so, if Christians are proper subjects of warning and caution against apostacy, and these are among the means by which God causes them to persevere—then there is no difficulty in understanding the passage which has been read to respect real Christians, and to be addressed to them, as a mean of preserving them from apostacy. Nor is this supposition inconsistent with the verse following, as some have supposed, but is rather supported by it: “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,” better than that you should thus apostatize, and crucify the Son of God afresh, “and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak”—though we thus set before you the fatal consequences of apostacy, and urge you in view of it, to diligence that you may persevere. “For God is not unrighteous,” is not unfaithful to his promise, “to forget your work and labor of love, &c.” Here we have the ground of the apostle’s assurance that all real Christians will persevere, notwithstanding the danger in themselves of apostacy, viz. the promises of the covenant of grace. God is not unfaithful; he has promised, and he will perform. And this also is all the encouragement or prospect which Christians, who have any true knowledge of their own hearts, can have, that they shall ever be enabled to persevere. For there is nothing in themselves, nor in the nature of grace, which secures them; they are kept only by the mighty power of God. And it is on the ground of the necessity of watchfulness and exertion in Christians to prevent them from falling away; and also in view of the encouragement there

is to this, from the promise of God, confirmed by an oath, that the apostle exhorts Christians in the text, to continue their diligence and exertions even to the end, in order to inherit the promises: and in order to make their calling and election sure, or obtain a comfortable assurance of salvation, in the present life: *And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end*—the same diligence as those did who have gone to inherit the promises; for it is added, “that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Having made these explanatory observations concerning the spirit of the context, I shall now discourse more particularly upon the text, and the subject suggested by it, viz. the assurance of hope:—which the apostle seems to introduce here, as a motive to diligence, in order to persevere. And surely if diligence and exertion are necessary to perseverance and to obtain salvation; and if this be the way, and the only way, to obtain a comfortable hope and assurance of salvation in this life, there is a double motive.

I propose in the

I. Place, to observe a few things upon hope, and the full assurance of hope.

II. Show that it is attainable.

III. Point out some things necessary to a rational or well grounded and full assurance of hope, and the way in which it is to be attained.

Under the first general head, I would observe,

1. That by hope in the scriptural use of the word, we understand sometimes the *object*, and sometimes the *grace* of hope. It is to be understood in the latter sense in the words of the text. Considered as a

Christian grace, it includes an exercise of the understanding, and an affection of heart towards the object. It implies a desire for the object, and an expectation of obtaining it. The object of a Christian's hope is salvation. Hence it is called in scripture, the "hope of salvation," and "the helmet of salvation." The salvation however which the Christian hopes for, is more especially and directly a salvation from sin, a deliverance from the dominion of it, and from all remains of sinful affection. Hence Christ, considered as a saviour from sin, and the object in and by whom God is to be enjoyed, may be, and often is in scripture represented as the object of the Christian's hope. An instance of this we have in verse 18 of the context, where the apostle says, "That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope, set before us." By hope here we are to understand the object of hope, which principally and directly is Christ. He is that hope which is said in the words following, to have *entered into that within the veil*; i. e. into the invisible heavens, where we by faith, and in the exercise of the grace of hope, follow him, and fasten upon him, so that he becomes the anchor, the stay, and support of the soul. And in the first epistle of John iii. 2. we are taught that Christ is the object of the Christian's hope, and in what respect he is so. "We know that when he," (Christ,) "shall appear, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. And every man that hath this hope in him" (a hope of seeing the Saviour as he is, and being made like him) "purifieth himself."

The hope of the Christian therefore is a hope of *salvation*. It is a desire, and well grounded expectation, of being admitted to the beatific and transforming vision and enjoyment of Christ in his glory—of being perfectly freed from sin, and brought into a glorious nearness and union with Christ, and through him with God and all holy beings.

2. With respect to the assurance of hope, I would observe, that it is an expression in reference to the evidence and expectation, which a Christian may have of attaining the object of his hope. A Christian may doubtless have a strong and direct desire for salvation, even the holy salvation of the gospel, and yet have no present expectation of obtaining it, because he may not see any evidence of his title, and therefore no present ground or reason to expect it. A person in this situation, though a real Christian, has no hope, much less has he the assurance of hope. But no sooner does he find reason to expect salvation, than he thus far exercises an assurance of hope—and when the expectation is well grounded—strong, full, and undoubting—he has then the full assurance of hope respected in the text—a full and an undoubting assurance of obtaining salvation.

I proceed to the

II. Thing proposed, which was to show that the full assurance of hope is attainable by Christians. Many seem not to think or realize that this is the case. They appear to consider it as entirely beyond the power, or natural capacity of common Christians to attain a full assurance of salvation. The apostle Paul, in all his epistles, speaks in the strain of full assurance: “Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” “I know whom I have believed.”—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day.” And such is the nature of the covenant of grace and God’s declared ends respecting the constitution of things, in the covenant, that it plainly appears to have been God’s design to make ample provision, that the full assurance of hope might be attainable by Christians in this life. The covenant is well ordered in all things and sure. The promises are full, and re-



peated many ways—God has confirmed them with an oath. And his declared design in doing this is, that the heirs of promise might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of further glory—Hebrew vi. 17, 18. “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” But all this would be in vain, to any purpose of giving this strong consolation, if an assurance of being an heir of the promises were not attainable.

I now proceed to the

III. Head, which is to point out some things essential to a well grounded and full assurance of hope, and the way in which it is to be attained. And I observe,

1. That in order, and previous to a full assurance of hope, there must be exercised a full assurance of faith. A person who has not exercised any degree of the assurance of faith, in the scriptural sense of the word, has no reason to exercise any hope of salvation, much less the full assurance of hope. This perhaps may be perplexing to the minds of some; because of the erroneous idea which is often, if not generally affixed to the term *assurance* of faith, commonly, though erroneously called the faith of assurance. But to make the matter plain, I would observe a few things: First, properly speaking, the objects of faith are the truths revealed in God’s word. That the worlds were made by the word of God—that there is a trinity of persons in the Godhead—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—that they who believe in him will have eternal life, and they who reject him, perish—that there will be a resurrection of the dead,

and a future and final judgment and retribution, and all other truths of revelation are the proper and direct objects of faith. Saving faith includes a cordial belief of these, and all divine truths ; but has more special and immediate respect to the character of God, and of his Son—the nature of the gospel salvation, and the fulness and willingness of Christ, to save all that come unto him.

Second, All faith necessarily implies in it a degree of assurance, with respect to the object of it. Fully to believe any truth, is to be fully satisfied and assured of that truth. As far as we believe and have faith in the truths of God's word, we so far have a confident satisfaction, or assurance with respect to them. But let it be remembered that our personal salvation is, in no instance, immediately or directly revealed, or declared to us, in the word or by the Spirit of God, and therefore, strictly speaking, is not an object of faith, and consequently not of the assurance of faith ; though it may be of hope. As the assurance of faith, therefore, is not an assurance of our personal salvation, as the assurance of hope is, there is no impropriety in saying that the full assurance of faith is necessary, in order to a well grounded, full assurance of hope. In support of this idea of the assurance of faith, and the necessity of it in order to the assurance of hope, I will adduce two or three texts of scripture.

The first is in the x. Chap. of this Epistle 22. verse : “ Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.” This is the only place in scripture where the phrase “ full assurance of faith is used ;” and I think it is evidently used in the sense, which has been given of it. The apostle had been holding up the new and living way of approach to God, by Christ, and the excellency of his character, as a great high priest, who had made a complete atonement. The words are therefore an exhortation to all, to exercise a full faith and confidence in the divine testimony,

respecting these things, and to lay aside all fears and unbelieving doubts, with respect to their warrant to return to God in this way, or his readiness to receive those who thus come.

But to suppose, on the contrary, that the apostle is here exhorting all to lay aside immediately fear, with respect to their having already obtained a personal title to salvation, would be very erroneous and inconsistent.

The other text is Romans xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all *joy and peace in believing*, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." As saving faith implies a realizing and approving view of divine things, the exercise of it will naturally be attended with joy and peace. And the apostle here plainly supposes that this must precede a well grounded hope, unto the fullness or full assurance of it.

2. Though true faith gives a sure title to salvation, yet we cannot rationally and safely suppose ourselves possessed of it, and exercise an assurance of hope, unless we find in ourselves a holy practice, and the exercise of those other Christian graces, which always accompany an evangelical faith : such as humility, repentance for sin, love to the divine perfections ; as his truth, justice, sovereignty, and infinite holiness ; and a disposition to receive the commandments of Christ, and all those truths which he came into the world to teach, and died to magnify. Many, because of the promise, "he that believeth shall be saved," seem disposed to single out this grace, and endeavor to convince themselves that they have it ; and, having succeeded, rest easy with respect to their eternal well being ; but would they attend to the word of God, they would find that *faith being alone is dead* ; and indeed that true faith cannot be found alone ; that a believing heart is always a humble, contrite, and penitent heart—disposed to rejoice in

the government of God, to be resigned and patient, to be devoted to the divine glory, and to flow out in benevolence to the temporal and eternal interests of men. In order to a well grounded assurance of salvation, therefore, we must not only suppose that we have had faith, and the assurance of faith, but must find that we have had those graces which always accompany it, and prove it to be genuine.

3. An external obedience, or visible morality is necessary to a good and assured hope of salvation.

Persons have often flattered themselves that they have faith, repentance, submission, and other Christian graces in their hearts, while they habitually lead an openly immoral life.

Such are in a most dangerous delusion.

It is incredible that any person should have genuine repentance, a true faith, and a sincere love to Christ, and not be disposed to obey his commands—"If a man love me," says Christ, "he will keep my words."

It is true, that the people of God are sanctified but in part—and may often fall into great and known sins; but we know that God never leaves them to an open, long continued, and habitual practice of known sin. Therefore, though conduct externally moral may proceed from bad motives, and is not of itself a certain evidence of faith; yet where this is wholly or greatly wanting, it is a sure evidence that persons have no true faith, nor any just grounds to exercise any hope, much less an assured hope of salvation.

4. In order to a comfortable, well grounded, and assured Christian hope, it is necessary that faith, love, and repentance should be in lively exercise. When Christians are in a relapsed, cold frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are much under the prevalence of their lusts and remaining corrupt affections—they

cannot rationally feel assured of their good estate, but have the utmost reason to fear respecting it. The memory of no past experience will be sufficient to banish doubts and fears in such a case, and keep alive a holy and Christian assurance in its clearness and strength. Past experience is indeed of great use and influence, to support and enliven the hope of the Christian—provided it be accompanied with the present exercise of holy affections. A remembrance of having frequently experienced the same gracious exercises, may well confirm the Christian, with respect to the genuineness of the present. But when there is no present, sensible exercise of faith, love, and repentance—and the Christian has only a bare recollection of something which at present is wholly unfeelt in the heart, he has but a weak ground of hope.

The present and lively exercise of grace, therefore, is necessary to a present assurance of hope.

Therefore, we see plainly the way, in which a constant, well grounded, and full assurance of hope is to be obtained. It is by the exercise of vital religion—by maintaining a close walk with God. There is no other way. People frequently enquire how they may know that they have an interest in Christ, or obtain assurance of salvation?

It would sometimes seem, should we look to outward appearances, that they were desirous of obtaining assurance in some easier way, than by leading a religious life, and maintaining holy affections. But no easier way is possible—and if persons build assurance on any other ground, it is but a vain presumption; they may as well think of being *saved* without religion, as of having a *rational assurance* without it.

Lastly, as a life of religion is necessary, so are great diligence and exertion; and they are proper to be urged upon Christians, as they are in the text, which is an exhortation to give diligence to the

full assurance of hope : i. e. to obtain those things which shall afford assurance, agreeably to the direction of St. Peter : “ Giving all diligence—add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off ; and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

## IMPROVEMENT.

1. This subject will help us to make a proper distinction between the *assurance of hope*, and the *assurance of faith* ; which seem by many to have been confounded, and used in a sense different from the apostle. A few observations will shew the respects in which they differ, and help to give the true meaning and import of each.

(1.) The assurance of faith respects the reality and nature of the truths revealed in the word of God, especially the testimony of God respecting his Son, and the nature of his salvation, as suited to the necessities of the sinner, and worthy of all acceptation. The assurance of hope respects a personal interest in Christ, and the prospect of enjoying those spiritual blessings which he communicates to his friends. The language of the assurance of faith, so far as it respects a Saviour, or salvation, is this : “ The divine testimony is true—I may approach unto God in

D d



Christ—he is able and willing to save, and will in no case cast out those that come unto him.” The language of the assurance of hope is : “ I have already been to Christ, in the exercise of a saving faith—I know in whom I have believed, and in believing am made an actual partaker of his salvation.”

(2.) The assurance of faith is essential to the being of a Christian—it precedes hope, and is the foundation of it. Whereas the assurance of hope is not essential to a person’s being a Christian. True saving faith, which has a degree of assurance with respect to divine things, may be exercised, where there is a total uncertainty in the mind, with respect to ever personally obtaining salvation.

(3.) No prior obedience is necessary to the assurance of faith ; but Christian diligence is necessary to the assurance of hope, and it must be preceded by, or built upon a holy faith and obedience.

We have always ground for the assurance of faith, and are always bound to exercise it. Not to possess it in any degree, is to be blind and stupid to the reality and excellence of divine things, and practically makes God a liar ; which is the essence of sin, and criminality. But we are not always bound to exercise *immediately* the full assurance of hope. We ought to doubt our interest in Christ, so long as we see not full evidence of it : still, we are to blame every moment we are destitute of the full assurance of hope—but our blame or sin consists in not having better evidence—in not exercising such faith, love, and repentance, as would give satisfactory evidence of our interest in Christ. But I trust sufficient has been said to shew the difference between the assurance of faith and of hope, and the true import of each—and to rectify any erroneous ideas which we may have had respecting them.

2. We learn, from this subject, the criminal blindness and error of those who build on assurance of

hope—upon dreams, visions, or imaginary voices, whispering or suggesting to them that their peace is made with God, or applying directly to themselves particular passages of scripture, as “Be of good cheer—thy sins are forgiven thee.” We can be no farther rationally assured, than we find evidence of our election of God. The only evidence of election is effectual calling, and the only evidence of effectual calling is a spiritual life—the fruits of the spirit in the exercise of faith, love, and repentance, and whatsoever is implied in these.

3. We learn, that merely for persons to profess that they have the full assurance of hope, is, in the minds of others, no decisive evidence either for or against them. It is not a decisive evidence in favor—because it may not be well founded, it may be a vain presumption. Nor is it, in itself, any evidence against a person, because we have shewn from scripture, that it is attainable, and often has been attained, and ought to be, by all. Nevertheless, the manner in which a profession of full assurance is made, may be a strong evidence against a person. When a person is frequent and bold in speaking of the goodness of his state, his great attainments, &c. and seems to have done with all further self-examination and trial, as of no further use—and when, at the same time, others see many things in him, which they suppose give him occasion to doubt, it is then a very strong evidence of a vain confidence and delusion.

4. We learn, from the subject, that there may be different degrees of assurance. Saving faith, wherever it exists, “is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;” it is, in its nature assured, in proportion to the degree of its actings; and the Christian hope, though it does not always, and necessarily accompany the actings of

faith, never, in degree of assurance, rises above the degree of faith.

5. Suffer me, my Christian brethren, to exhort you to persevering diligence to attain the full assurance of hope, and to maintain it unto the end. For motives consider that it is attainable—that it is a commanded duty, and a most reasonable service—that, in the exercise of it, you will have unspeakable comfort and joy—that it will be for the glory of God, as it will imply and exhibit supreme delight in him, and a recumbency of soul upon him, as an all sufficient portion. If you exercise the full assurance of hope, your light will shine, and others, seeing your good conversation, will be led to glorify your Father, who is in heaven. Be exhorted then, “to shew diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.”

To conclude, let those who are in a state of sin and impenitence—be exhorted to attend to this subject—those who have never yet hearkened to the endearing and free call of the gospel, and who do not pretend to have the comfort of a Christian hope, nor the communion and enjoyment of God in the world. Oh, that the souls of such would awake, and attend to their situation !

If, my hearers, final perseverance in a life of faith and holiness be necessary to salvation, then certainly to begin to persevere is necessary.—If perseverance in faith and holiness be necessary to salvation—then certainly perseverance in impenitence will end in your fearful destruction.

Why then, sinners, are you not awake, and engaged, and exerting yourselves as much for your souls, as for the things of this world ?

But perhaps some of you will plead, or object the very doctrines which have been this day held up, as a reason why you do not, and ought not, to attend to the means of the gospel, and exert yourselves in the ways of religion. You will say that effectual calling and perseverance are the effect of divine influence on the heart, and the fruit of election, and therefore you need not exert yourselves, or use the means which God has commanded. Those who are really believing this, I would call upon, by way of reply, to be consistent, and never more make any exertions, or take any steps to obtain any temporal object—for the divine counsel and purpose extend to your worldly concerns, and the success of your labor, as much as to the things of religion and your souls. But you will not do this, in temporal things, for though you suppose the end made sure, you consider the means as connected with it. With respect to your crops, and your merchandize, you do not say they will be as they are determined, let you do what you will—and so you will be perfectly idle. You therefore act an inconsistent part, and manifest that you are blind as to the things of religion. But perhaps you will say you do not believe the necessity of divine influence, or the divine determination in respect to the things of religion. You only mean to plead, upon the ground of these doctrines, that you need not exert yourselves. To such I would reply—we allow of no such inference from these doctrines as supposes means and exertions unnecessary. It is plain from scripture that without means and exertions, none will obtain salvation. But let it be admitted, for a moment, that these doctrines are inconsistent: You say you are not dependent on the divine influence—that you have no moral inability, nor any inability—and that there are no divine decrees or purposes respecting you. Admit it: But you will acknowledge that you are sinners, and that

the gospel is offered to you. Why then do you not attend to your case, and accept the offered mercy? May God, by his almighty spirit, awaken you to a sense of your danger and sin; and carry on a work of grace in you unto the day of Jesus Christ, that you may be to the praise of his glory! Amen.

THE LOSS OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER A  
SORE AFFLICTION;

ILLUSTRATED IN A  
SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE  
*Rev. Joseph Washburn, A. M.*

*Pastor of the First Church in Farmington;*

WHO DIED AT SEA,

DEC. 25, 1805.

PREACHED AT FARMINGTON

JUNE 19, 1806.

---

BY ASAHEL HOOKER, A. M.  
*Pastor of the Church in Goshen.*

---



---

HARTFORD : PRINTED BY LINCOLN & GLEASON.





---

## FUNERAL SERMON.

---

### ACTS XX. 38.

*Sorrowing most of all, for the words which he spake,  
that they should see his face no more.*

THE scene, which is described, in the latter part of this chapter, is one of the most tender and impressive, which is any where exhibited, in the sacred history. St. Paul had spent several years in the city of Ephesus, previously to his returning thither, for the last time. By means of his labors, as an apostle, and minister of Christ, a large and flourishing church had been gathered, in that city. A part of the address to this church, which was made by Christ, in the Revelation of St. John, is in these words : “ Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write ; These things, saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ; I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not ; and hast found them liars : And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.”

When St. Paul was returning from Macedonia, to Jerusalem, a short time before he was arrested, and sent prisoner to Rome, he came to Ephesus. Having

called the elders of the church, he reminded them of the manner, in which he had been with them, at all seasons, from the first day that he came into Asia, serving the Lord, with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations ;—and how he had kept back nothing, which was profitable ; but had shewed them, and taught them, publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Having noticed the journey, on which he was bound to Jerusalem, the afflictions which he anticipated, and the support and consolation, which he derived from the gospel of the grace of God, he added : “ And now, behold I know, that ye all, among whom I have gone, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.” In view of his fidelity, in not shunning to declare unto them all the counsel of God, he took them to record, that he was pure from the blood of all men. Having given charge to the elders of the church, in prospect of the evils which they would be called to encounter, after his departing ; and having commended them to God, and to the word of his grace, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, *sorrowing most of all, for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.*

The following sentiment is naturally derived from the text :

*The loss of a faithful minister is a sore affliction.*

The sentiment may be usefully illustrated, by the following considerations.

1. The truth of it may appear, from the nature and importance of the relation, subsisting between a Christian minister, and the people of his charge. His relation to them is that of a watchman to their souls. Their spiritual and eternal interests are specially committed to his care. Having the heart and the conscience of a faithful minister, and habitu-

ally feeling the awful responsibility, which is attached to his station, he must view the souls of his people, as a trust of infinite value. Their relation to him must be felt to be extremely interesting, by all who are not past feeling, because they are given over to a reprobate mind. Impressed with any just sense of the account, which he must render, to the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, they must feel for themselves, the answerable account, which they also must render, for their improvement of his ministry. Having that confidence in him, to which he is entitled, when proved and found faithful, they must view the relation between him, and themselves, to be one of the most important, which ever exists among men. They must feel themselves warranted to look up to him, as their spiritual guide and instructor, and that they are bound to receive the word, from his mouth, as the word of God. Indeed, he is to them the messenger of the Lord of hosts—the ambassador of peace and salvation, who is divinely authorized, to comfort those who mourn in Zion, and beseech sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God.

2. The strength of attachment, which a church and people must be supposed to have, to such a minister, will render the loss of him sorely afflictive. His being faithful implies, that he is a good man—one who is influenced, in performing the duties of his trust, by charity out of a pure heart. He has the same spirit of disinterested regard to Christ, and to the souls for whom he died, which Paul had, for his kindred according to the flesh, when he could declare, with nothing less than the solemnity of an oath, that he had great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart for them; and when his heart's desire and prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved. Every faithful minister of Christ has the same disinterested and excellent spirit, which enabled Paul to say to the Corinthians: “I will very gladly

spend, and be spent for your souls, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Viewing a minister, in a relation so endearing, and having a just confidence in him, as one, whose heart is so closely united to them, and so much devoted to their best, even their eternal interest, how affectionate must be their attachment to him. How much endeared, by such means, was St. Paul, to the church at Ephesus. He had been with them, so long, and so faithfully discharged the duties of a watchman, that they could not see him taking his leave of them, without those tears, and affectionate salutations, which demonstrated how highly they esteemed him in love, for his works' sake. But they were scarcely more attached to him, than many have been to their spiritual guides, in all subsequent ages. The faithful minister, who is with his charge, at all seasons; who not only dispenses the word of life to them, steadily, on the sabbath, but has frequent occasions, to bear a part in their joys, and their sorrows; to visit their sick, and their dying, and to sympathize with their mourners, must become greatly endeared to them. There are few other relations among men, which furnish the means of uniting, at once, the affection and esteem of so many hearts.

3. A faithful minister of Christ is a great blessing. Much good is rationally expected from his ministry: much is often accomplished, by means of it. He so lives, that none have just occasion for saying, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" The influence of his example, and of the truths, which he is continually commending to the consciences of those who hear him, must be no less friendly to their present peace, their edification and comfort, than to their final salvation. How rich a blessing was Paul, to the church at Ephesus! How many were instructed; how many were comforted; how many were eternally saved, by means of his la-

bors ! How much light and joy must he have imparted, during the years which he abode with them, and preached unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ ! The measures, which are often pursued by destitute flocks, to obtain, and to support, a faithful minister, sufficiently evince, that their apprehensions accord with this view of the subject. How great must be the blessing to them, considered as sinners, involved in guilt and darkness, to have one for their spiritual watchman, who, like Paul, will not shun to declare unto them all the counsel of God ; and who will thence use the means, which are best adapted, for the instruction and salvation of their souls. How much good is often accomplished, by the blessing of God, on the faithfulness of such a minister. How much influence is exerted by him, which is rendered effectual by the grace of God, for putting vice and irreligion to shame, for arresting the progress of error, when it cometh in like a flood, for promoting the kingdom of righteousness and peace, and advancing the glory of God, in the salvation of sinners. How often is his ministry rendered a savor of life, to the souls of his hearers ; and how comforting and instructive his administration of the word and ordinances of the gospel, to those who have received the truth, in the love of it ; to those, who are daily becoming meet for the society of angels, and preparing to find their heaven of heavens, in the presence of God, and of the Lamb.

4. The loss of a faithful minister is a sore affliction, because it is many times followed by the most unpleasant consequences, to the people of his charge. They are left by him, as sheep having no shepherd. Hence the danger they are in of being scattered abroad, or of being led astray, and even destroyed, by wolves, in sheeps' clothing. Such were some of the circumstances, which rendered the final departure of St. Paul so calamitous, and distressing, to



the church of Ephesus. Hence we find him saying, in his last interview with them : " For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Such are some of the evils, to which a church and people are specially exposed, by the loss of a faithful minister. Hence the exhortation of St. Paul, in his epistle, which was afterwards written to the Ephesians, that they should henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about, with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ; but speaking the truth in love, should grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ."

But the loss of a faithful minister not only exposes his bereaved charge to much evil, from the influence of false teachers, who are always ready to beguile the unwary; but they are also in imminent danger of being embroiled, divided, and scattered, by men who speak perverse things, to promote some favorite interest of their own. For this cause said the apostle, in an epistle, which he wrote to the church at Ephesus, while a prisoner at Rome ; " I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called ; with all lowliness, and meekness ; with long suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.—Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.—Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from among you, with all malice."

Nothing renders the loss of a faithful minister more calamitous, and justly afflictive to his bereaved charge, than the danger, to which they are suddenly exposed, of becoming a people divided against them-

selves ; so as not only to prevent any spiritual advantage, from an occasional administration of the word and ordinances of the gospel ; but to prevent their uniting in the settlement of another, to guide them, in the way of peace. How often does it happen, when a faithful minister is removed by death, or otherwise, that his flock are not only scattered, but become so divided among themselves, that nothing but the bitter fruits of their dissensions can effectually teach them the importance of forbearing one another in love, that they may unite in pursuing the things, which make for peace. How distressing, and how unfriendly to the most important interests, even the interests of the soul, are the bitter envying and strife, in which religious societies are often involved, in attempting to repair the loss of a minister, by the settlement of another, in whom their hearts are not united.

5. A faithful minister may be peculiarly endeared, to numbers of his charge, by his having been blessed of God, as the happy instrument of their salvation. Thus, no doubt, was the apostle endeared to many, and probably to most, of the church at Ephesus. It seems evident, from the sacred history, that the church, in that city, was first organized, by St. Paul ; and that it was, afterwards, greatly enlarged, edified, and comforted, by his faithful labors. Many of its members must have regarded him, as their spiritual father, by whose means they were translated from the kingdom of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Hence the endearing attachment, which so embittered the scene of parting, when he prayed with them, for the last time, and bade them an affectionate and final farewell. — This is one circumstance, by which the loss of a faithful minister is rendered the more afflictive, to numbers of his charge. They can remember the time, when the divine word, proceeding out of his

mouth, was “ sharper than a two-edged sword ;” when it pricked them in the heart, so that they could take no rest, till they were hopefully renewed, by the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, and washed from their sins, in his blood. Hence their living affection, for the man, whom it had pleased God to honor, as the instrument of opening their eyes, of turning them from darkness to light, and of making them heirs of the great salvation. But certainly, in proportion to the endearment, arising from a circumstance so interesting, must be the painful sensibilities, which are awakened when the object thus endeared, is torn from their embraces. Yet,

6. The loss of a faithful minister may be still more afflictive to others, because they have reason for the most painful reflections, on their misimprovement of his ministry. This is a view of the subject, in which it may be deeply interesting to many. Some may have seldom attended on his ministry ; or even have wholly neglected to hear him. Others, who seemed to be glad, when it was said unto them, “ We will go into the house of the Lord,” may have contented themselves, with barely hearing the word of God, without doing it, and hence have been the betrayers, and murderers of their own souls. “ The word spoken did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it.” Their spiritual watchman was faithful ; he could say, with the apostle, “ I will very gladly spend, and be spent for your souls.” He accordingly testified repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ ; and kept back nothing, which might be profitable to his hearers. He often warned them, to flee from the wrath to come, and affectionately besought them, in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled unto God. But alas ! their ear was uncircumcised, and they would not harken. The word of the Lord was unto them a reproach ; they had no delight in it. Hence the occasion, which was

often found to say, in view of those, who forsook the assembling of themselves together, and of others, who rejected his message concerning Jesus, If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep for you, in secret places. To such of his charge, how justly, and how sorely afflictive must be their loss, when his work is done, and he is summoned away to render up his account, at the judgement seat of Christ. How painfully embittered the reflections, which must be poured in upon their hearts, like the wide breaking in of waters, when they consider, that their minister, now gone to the world of spirits, had labored for them in vain, and spent his strength for nought; that in making light of the gospel, which he preached, in the name of Jesus, they had despised the Son of God, and pronounced themselves unworthy of eternal life.

7. To all such their loss must be rendered more deeply afflictive, by the fearful expectation, that their departed minister will appear, as a witness against them, in the judgment of the great day. They must then meet him for the last time; and, if their sins have not been forsaken, and washed away, in the blood of atonement, they must be separated from him for ever. In rendering an account of his ministry, and of the treatment which he received from those, to whom he was sent, he must testify, that some of them were scarcely willing to hear him, and that many others, when they heard his message, made light of it, and went their ways, saying of Christ, "We will not have this man, to reign over us." If such are not past feeling, with what deep remorse, and anxiety, must they look forward to that dreadful day, in which their departed minister, who had faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come, shall testify against them, before an assembled universe, and in the presence of that infinite Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

8. The loss of a faithful minister must be a sore affliction to the church, and people of his charge, because they shall see him no more, in the land of the living. Such was the affliction, sustained by the church at Ephesus, when they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all, for the words, which he spake, that they should see his face no more. Might he have returned to them again, after a short season, as he had done before ; the separation would have caused them but little pain. But the thought of all which he had said to them, and of all which he had done, and suffered, for them, when joined with the assurance just given, that the parting was for life ; that they had now heard his last sermon ; and united with him, for the last time, in social prayer ; and that they should see his face no more, 'till they should meet him, amidst the amazing scenes of eternity, no wonder they were overwhelmed with grief and tears. And such, my brethren, must be the deep affliction of any religious society, when their faithful pastor and minister, who was united, and endeared to them, by a thousand ties, is called to bid them a long, and last adieu.

The following reflections are suggested, by the preceding view of this subject.

1. Is the loss of a faithful minister an event so afflictive, it must then be regarded, as a grievous frown of Providence. In such a bereaving stroke, the hand of God is to be seen, and specially acknowledged. If he cut off, and take away, who can hinder him ? who will say unto him, What dost thou ? Few events are so painfully felt, by so many hundreds of people, at once. That it must be regarded as a frown of Providence, is naturally inferred from the circumstances, by which multitudes are so deeply afflicted. Hence the occasion, for a church and people, thus afflicted, to humble themselves under the



mighty hand of God, and to inquire, with the deepest submission and reverence, Wherefore hath the Lord dealt thus with us, in anger, and in sore rebuke? Whether such rebuke be designed in mercy, to humble and purify his children, and to awaken, and lead sinners to repentance, will be best decided by the result, when it shall be seen what improvement is made of his dealings.

2. Is the loss of a faithful minister a sore affliction, for such reasons as have been assigned, then certainly the church and congregation, in this place, must have been greatly afflicted, by the late death of theirs. I trust, that all those who knew him will admit the following tribute of respect, as justly due to his memory, and as seasonably offered, on this occasion.

The Rev. JOSEPH WASHBURN, was born at Middletown, in this state, May 13, 1766. He was born of respectable Christian parents, from whom he received a religious education. Being hopefully sanctified, by the grace of God, while young, he was inclined to devote himself to the service of Christ, and the good of his fellow men, in the work of the ministry. For this purpose he obtained a collegiate education, and was graduated, at Yale College, in September, 1793. Having completed his preparatory studies, he was licensed, as a candidate for the ministry. In the month of October, 1794, he came to this place, and in May of the succeeding year, was ordained the Pastor of this church.

Mr. Washburn was a good scholar, a good divine, a good man, and a good minister. His mind was rather formed, for critical investigation, than for works of taste. His ideas being the result of much study and reflection, he acquired a knowledge of truth, rather by a process of patient reasoning, than by a sudden glance of the mind. His perceptions were not rapid, but clear; and his imagination rather



chaste than brilliant. His judgement was manly, and discriminating. His sermons, which were evidently prepared, under a solemn and abiding sense of invisible and eternal things, were well digested, and matured, by intense application. His systematical discourses, on the perfections of God, and the evidences of revelation, which are doubtless remembered by many, who heard them, are a specimen of deep investigation, and of sound reasoning, which is not often exceeded.—He loved his sacred work, and obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. He sought to be useful, rather than celebrated ; to edify, rather than to please ; and to preach Christ Jesus, the Lord, rather than himself. His labors, in season, and out of season, were chiefly devoted to his flock, for whose souls he was ever ready to spend, and be spent. His labors, in this place, which were great from their commencement, were continually increasing. That his days might be more exclusively devoted to the active and more public duties of his ministry, he was induced to spend whole nights in study. Being singularly fitted, as he was disposed, for doing good to the rising generation, he bestowed much labor on them, and spared no pains, nor exertions, for instructing and leading them in the right way. From the commencement of the religious revival, among the people of his charge, until his strength was much impaired by disease, a period of between two and three years, the youths attended a stated meeting for religious instruction, at his house, which was frequent and full, in which he was accustomed to pray twice with them, and to explain and apply a portion of scripture, which he deemed best adapted to the occasion, and to the state of his audience, and best calculated to promote their spiritual welfare : and during the whole period of his ministry, while able to labor, he frequently visited the numerous schools in the society, instructed them in the things of God and religion, in a manner suited to their years, and

commended them to the divine care and blessing, by solemn prayer.

None but the heart of a faithful minister can have any just conception of the affectionate and deep concern, which he habitually felt for the souls of his people.—He kept unspotted from the world, and encountered trials and embarrassments, with a patient and firm trust in God. He was enriched with that “wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” He knew how to speak a word in season ; and to avail himself of times, circumstances, and events, for instructing, and being instructed. He was kind to the poor ; hospitable to strangers ; ready to countenance and promote the good order and peace of society, and to aid the cause of truth and righteousness among men. For the sake of peace, he would sacrifice every thing but truth, and a good conscience. This amiable trait in his character appeared so soon, that he was distinguished, among the companions of his childhood, as a peace-maker. In public life, he either found the people his friends, or made them such, by a winning and affectionate address. His conversation was grave, and yet cheerful ; and his society at once pleasing, and instructive. His whole deportment was, in a high degree, conciliating ; and, to crown the whole, he was blameless, and approved of all men.

His talents and piety, were rendered eminently useful, in the station, which Providence had assigned him, by an uncommon share of that sound wisdom and discretion, which enabled him to perform the duties of a minister, so as to give no unnecessary offence. While he shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, such was his manner of doing it, and even of explaining and enforcing those truths, which are best suited to bring down the loftiness of man, that he did not fail to commend himself to the

conscience of his hearers, in the sight of God.—He deeply felt the importance of an exemplary, and holy conversation, in those, who have professed the religion of Christ. Hence he aimed much, in his preaching, to edify and quicken them, that they might so live, as to adorn their profession, and commend the truth to the consciences of others.—Thus was he approved, as a workman, who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

In the laborious discharge of his duty, he was not only faithful, but greatly successful. By the blessing of God on his ministry, he was hopefully instrumental of adding many to this church, of those who shall be saved. When Providence directed his way to this place, the seed previously sown, had sprung up, so that the fields were becoming white unto the harvest. Not long afterwards, a second harvest ensued, in which he labored abundantly, and with no small success ; so that, within about five years, from the time of his settlement, an addition of one hundred and sixty members was made to this church. Since that time, the additions have been considerable.

From a rare assemblage of useful talents, and from the blessing of God, which so graciously attended the labors of Mr. Washburn, the hope was naturally cherished, that he might be long continued a blessing to this numerous people, and to the cause of Zion. But God seeth not as man seeth ; his thoughts are not as ours ; his ways are unsearchable. The man, who had been the favored instrument of so much good, and from whom more was expected, was suddenly arrested in his useful course, by a fatal disease. This disease was probably the fruit of his incessant labors, for the good of souls ; a disease, for which the best medical aid was tried in vain. The time of his departure was at hand. Under all the trials, which must have borne upon his heart, in view of his family, and his flock, he sustained the wearisome days and nights, which were appointed

to him, with the cheerful submission, the patience, and the fortitude of a Christian. With these, his spirits were rendered composed, in the near prospect of death. Through the whole of his illness, he was remarkably composed, and enjoyed great peace of mind ; while daily giving up himself, his family, and his people to God. He often said, that he was laid by, as a broken vessel ; and that if he knew his own heart, his first and great desire to recover was, that he might again preach the gospel, believing, that he could preach more than ever, as a dying man, to dying men.

But the event was otherwise ordered. With a view of spending the ensuing winter, in a milder climate, believing it his duty to attempt whatever might render his recovery more hopeful, he took his journey southward, in October last. By the advice of friends, he was persuaded to pursue his journey, from Alexandria to Norfolk, and thence to Charleston, by water. But the latter part of the voyage proved tempestuous, and was a probable means of hastening his dissolution. Having been seven days from Norfolk, he died, at 3 o'clock in the night preceding the 25th of December, being in the fortieth year of his age, and the eleventh of his ministry. With that hope, which is an anchor to the soul, and with that heavenly peace, which none but Christ can give, he resigned his breath, without a struggle, or a groan. To those about him, the scene was the more gloomy and afflictive, as the ship was then enveloped, in darkness and tempest, and tossed to and fro, by the raging billows. After six days, when, by reason of alternate calms, and contrary winds, no hope remained of arriving shortly, in port, his remains were committed to the bosom of the ocean. Though not deposited in the grave, with those obsequies, and marks of respect, which the feelings of humanity would have preferred, yet his flesh will rest in hope, and not be forgotten, at the

resurrection of the just.—The Lord hath done that, which seemed good in his sight, and blessed be his holy name.—“The memory of the just shall be blessed.” “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth : yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.” “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” The time, and all the circumstances of his sickness and death, were doubtless ordered by him, “who is great in counsel, and excellent in working.” In the wisdom and rectitude of his providence, may we all have a cheerful and humble acquiescence, under this afflictive stroke, and be enabled, with one heart, to ascribe righteousness, and judgment unto Him, who sitteth on the throne.

The subject will now be applied to this bereaved church and congregation.

BRETHREN and FRIENDS, God has taught you, by painful experience, that the loss of a faithful minister is a sore affliction. In your relation to him, as a watchman to your souls, you felt that strong and endearing attachment, which evinced how justly you estimated his worth. During his ministry, you had much occasion to rejoice in his light. The usefulness, for which he was so eminently fitted, by his natural and acquired endowments, and above all, by the grace of God, was happily realized by you, till his days on earth were numbered and finished. Hence, when he bade you farewell, and took his journey, to a far country, you sorrowed most of all, for the afflictive result, which was then anticipated, that you should see his face no more. Instead of repining, remember the important services, which he so actively, and so faithfully rendered to you, and to your children. Let a sense of your obligations to God, for such services, be mingled with your tears, and assuage your grief. By some of you, he will



doubtless be gratefully, and affectionately remembered, as your spiritual father ; and by still more of you as the faithful servant of Christ, who fed you with knowledge and understanding, and often broke to you the bread of life. But do none of you find occasion, this day, to reflect with bitterness, on your misimprovement of his ministry ? Have none of you often, without cause, or even habitually, neglected to attend on his weekly ministrations ? Have not still more of you occasion to say, "How have we hated instruction, and our hearts despised reproof ? We would not obey the voice of our teacher, nor incline our ear, when he instructed us." And now "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." When he sought to persuade you, by the terrors of the Lord ; and even when he pressed upon you the endearing invitations of infinite mercy, did you not begin—did you not continue, with one consent, to make excuse ? Alas ! did you not go your ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize ?—You remember, in what manner he was with you, at all seasons ; how he taught you, publicly, and from house to house. And still, did not many of you furnish occasion for his saying often, and even for his saying to the last, if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep for you in secret places ? But his voice you will hear no more, within these consecrated walls. No more will you behold him, standing in this awful place, to lead in your devotions, and minister to you, in the name of Christ. His face you will see no more, till the sea shall give up the dead, which are in it, and all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth. Oh, let the time past suffice, and more than suffice, that many of you have lived only for this world, and neglected the things, which belong unto your peace. Prepare to meet your departed minister ; yea, prepare to meet your God. To-day, after so long a



time, as it is said to day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

When the apostle was bidding his last farewell to the church at Ephesus, he fore-warned them of the distressing evils, which should befall them, after his departure. God grant, my brethren, that this may prove a word in season to you. Remembering the wormwood and the gall, may you continue to learn wisdom, from the painful experience of former days. See, therefore, that ye fall not out by the way. Take heed, that no root of bitterness spring up to trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Endeavor thus to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. To this purpose, "mark them who cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine, which ye have learned, and avoid them;" and God grant, that you may ever know, "how good, and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity." Let your prayers, and your exertions be united, for repairing the loss, sustained in the death of your late beloved pastor, by obtaining the most suitable person, to fill his place in this house and in your hearts, and to guide you in the way of peace. "And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

3. If the loss of a faithful minister be so afflictive to the people of his charge, how much more so must it be, to his consort, and his orphan children! He must have been near and dear to his people, but much more so, to the companion of his bosom, and to the children, which God had graciously given him.—To his charge the loss may be repaired; but how

repaired to her, who was one with him, and to those dear little ones, which were "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh?" His people have lost a faithful minister, but his partner has lost in him the husband of her youth, and his children a father, in whom, under God, they might have safely confided, as their protector and friend. Had you, my hearers, witnessed the parting scene, at Ephesus, and among those, who fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, had seen a wife, and four small children, would you not have sorrowed most all for them, that they should see his face no more? How impressive then is the present call, to sympathize with the widowed partner, and the bereaved children now before you? Under an affliction so deep, are they not intitled to our tenderest commiseration, and to an interest in our unceasing prayers to God? Their "breach is great like the sea, who can heal it?" Should we attempt to administer comfort, by directing them to any thing, short of the consolations of God, they might justly say, "Miserable comforters are ye all." It is evident, from the nature, and the depth of their affliction, that none but "God, who comforteth those, that are cast down," can administer those strong consolations, which are needful, under such a bereavement. It is our duty, however, to weep with those who weep, no less than to rejoice, with those who rejoice. If we have that compassion, which belongs essentially to the religion of the gospel, our hearts will feel, that, "to those who are afflicted, pity should be showed by their friends." Knowing that the God who heareth prayer, is the God of all comfort; and that he who woundeth, is both able and willing to make whole, we shall go to him, on our bended knees, shall we go to him, humbly intreating, that he would comfort, protect, and save this distressed family, by sanctifying an affliction so grievous, and causing it to yield them the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And can we forbear, to intercede with God for them, that he would

comfort their hearts, and teach them, by grateful experience, that he is the God, with whom the widow and the fatherless shall find mercy.

Such, Dear Madam, shall be our prayer for you, and your dear little ones. We know, and deeply feel the occasion, which might have almost justified you in saying, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me !" But our hope is in God, that he will never leave you comfortless ;—that he will enable you to say, with a heart full of confidence and joy in him, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted." This you have doubtless been enabled to say already. We trust you can say it still, even in view of "that night, so much to be remembered," that night of darkness and tempest, in which it pleased God, to take away the desire of your eyes, with a stroke. Blessed be the Lord, who beheld you, with tender compassion, when oppressed with grief, too big for utterance ; who caused joy to spring up, in the midst of the deepest sorrow ; and that, in mercy to those dear babes, which you had left behind, he rebuked the raging of the sea, when it seemed ready to swallow you up, and suffered not the stream to go over your soul. We rejoice, that God has been your "refuge and strength, a very present help, in the time of trouble." Blessed be his holy name, "who giveth songs in the night," and who causeth, even the "the widow's heart to sing for joy." We desire to mingle our grateful acknowledgments with yours, for the abundant kindness, by which your last journey was made prosperous, while your partner was yet alive ; and that when he was taken from you, under circumstances so afflictive, it still pleased God to be with you, by the light of his countenance ;—that he delivered you from the perils of a stormy ocean, and directed your way to that hospitable abode, where he had graciously provided friends to receive you ; even friends, who deemed it

a privilege, to divide with you the cup of grief and tears, and to comfort you, with their kindness, their counsels, and their prayers. May the good Lord reward them a thousand fold into their bosoms, for all their kindness to you, in the day of your calamity. May he say unto them, in that day, when he shall appear in his glory, “Come ye blessed of my Father, —for I was a stranger, and ye took me in.”\* We now welcome your return from the land of strangers; and pray you to be comforted, that God is still “a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, in his holy habitation.” From those precious words, on which he doubtless caused the heart of your deceased friend to rest, may you derive abundance of consolation: “Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.” Though clouds and darkness are round about God, yet, to his glory be it spoken, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. He is

\* The Editors in behalf of Mrs. Washburn cannot omit, in this place, to make honorable mention of the hospitality and kindness, with which her late consort and herself were every where received, in the course of their long and painful journey, until he was separated from her, and with which she was afterwards received and entertained, in her deeply afflicted and widowed state, through the winter and part of the succeeding spring, in the family of the Rev. Doct. Keith of Charleston; and of his distinguished liberality and that of others, in that City, and in other places, which more than supplied her with the means of present support, and of defraying the whole expenses of the journey till her return to Farmington: and also of the liberal patronage which the publication of this work has received from the citizens of Charleston, and of other places, far remote, and to whom Mr. Washburn’s character must have been unknown; and of that which it has received from every other quarter. This unusual liberality will ever be recollected with lively gratitude to those who have taken an interest in her concerns, and especially to him who, by such unexpected means has provided a way which promises to extricate her, and her orphan children, from present embarrassment, and given an earnest of future support.

not pleased to comfort the afflicted, by explaining to them the special reasons of his conduct, but by presenting motives, and affording his grace, to render them patient in tribulation, and joyful, in hope of his glory.—He is infinitely great, and wise, and good ;—a God full of compassion, and ready to make all his grace abound towards those, who put their trust in him. “ Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Hence he chasteneth them only for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and be prepared to dwell for ever, in the presence of his glory.

It may be no small consolation to you, Madam, to consider the abiding interest, which you will have in the friendship, and in the prayers of many, by whom your excellent husband was greatly beloved in life, and as deeply lamented in death. Be assured, that a numerous and affectionate people, to whom his memory must remain endeared, while they live, will not be unmindful of you, nor neglect any fit occasion, for showing kindness to you, and to your beloved children, for their father’s sake.—And now, Madam, we commend you also, together with your little flock unto God, and to the word of his grace, in a humble trust, that your present afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for you a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.

4. The death of a faithful minister must be an afflictive and solemn admonition to his surviving brethren. To us, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, the present is such an admonition. Though it be hardly realized, it is awfully certain, that we cannot continue long, by reason of death. God only knoweth how soon our wives shall be left widows,



our children fatherless, and our people as sheep, having none to watch over them. The scene of parting is before us, in which we must bid adieu to our families, and our flocks, to see their faces no more, till we meet them again, amidst the awful realities of the world to come. To all of us, an event so interesting in its consequences, is swiftly approaching, and to some of us is probably near, at the doors. How then should we be with those, at all seasons, to whose souls God hath made us watchmen. How diligent should we be, to instruct them publicly, and from house to house ; how faithful to preach unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ ; to pray for them, without ceasing ; to declare unto them the counsel of God ; and to make ourselves examples to them of whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report. How " little, little," should all the glory of this world appear to us, when we consider the high vocation with which we are called, and the vast importance of the work assigned us, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. How immensely interesting to ourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers, that we be instant in season, and out of season, and that we watch, and pray, and live, and preach, as becometh dying men—as becometh dying ministers ; and that we spare no pains, to rescue and save the souls, for which Christ died ! If unfaithful, alas ! my brethren, we shall have prepared a pillow of thorns, for the bed of death, and a fearful reckoning, for a judgment day. Would to God, that the present afflictive and solemn admonition of his providence might be richly sanctified, for quickening us, to a zeal and faithfulness, becoming the amazing importance of our work. And when this work is finished, and they all, among whom we have gone, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see our faces no more, may we cheerfully bid them farewell, in the joyful hope of meeting them



again, with the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.

Brethren and Friends, of this numerous assembly. We beseech you to pray for us; for us your dying minister; for us, who watch for your souls, and must give account, that we may be faithful to God, and to you, and be prepared to give up our accounts with joy, and not with grief. Pray for this bereaved church and congregation, that the shepherd of Israel, who dwelleth between the Cherubims, and never slumbereth, nor sleepeth, would graciously keep them, as the apple of his eye, and presently give them another Pastor, after his own heart. Pray for the bereaved consort, and the fatherless children of their late Pastor. Pray also for yourselves, and for your children, that you may receive the truth, as it is in Jesus, and be faithful to instruct them, in the way of righteousness and peace, and train them up for the world of glory. Remember, that you, and your ministers must surely die, and that you and they must shortly meet, at the tribunal of heaven, to receive an irreversible doom.—And now may God Almighty bless you, and grant you grace to obey the gospel of his Son, that when he shall come in his glory, you may be our rejoicing, as we would humbly hope to be yours, in the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

## LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE.

#### *Walpole.*

Rev. Pliny Dickinson

### MASSACHUSETTS.

#### *Becket.*

Mr. Oliver Brewster

Nathaniel Kingsley

Rev. Joseph L. Mills

Mr. Benjamin C. Perkins

Ebenezer Walden

#### *Blanford.*

Rev. John Keep

#### *Granville.*

Mr. Roger Harrison

#### *Great Barrington.*

Mr. Moses Hitchcock

#### *Harvard.*

Mr. Stephen Bemis

#### *Hatfield.*

Mr. John Chester

Rev. Joseph Lyman, D.D.

Mr. Jonathan H. Lyman

Davis Mayhew

Ebenezer Wright

#### *Lee.*

Rev. Alvan Hyde

Mr. Reuben Taylor

William Wilcox

#### *Lenox.*

Rev. Samuel Shepard 6

#### *Northampton.*

Mrs. Alethea Ashman

#### *Southampton.*

Mr. Asahel Birge, jr.

Noah Clark

Samuel Clark

Rev. Simeon Gould

Library

Mr. Alexander Loomis

Silas Sheldon

Cornelius Searle, jr.

Zophar Searle, jr.

Sylvester Woodbridge

#### *Springfield.*

Mr. Elisha Ely

#### *Stockbridge.*

Mrs. Abigail Dwight

Mr. Oliver P. Sargeant

#### *Western.*

Rev. Sylvester Burt 3

Mr. William Brown

Isaac Bliss

David Denison

#### *Westfield.*

Mr. Benjamin Deming

David H. Gleason  
Rev. Isaac Knapp  
*West Springfield.*

Rev. Joseph Lathrop, D.D.  
*Williamsburg.*

Rev. Henry Lord  
*Williamstown.*

Mr. Gamaliel S. Olds  
*Whateley.*

Mr. Alvan Sanderson

#### VERMONT.

*Clarendon.*

Mr. Daniel Smith  
*Cornwall.*

Hon. Joel Lindsley  
*Craftsborough.*

Samuel Craft, Esq.

Mr. Ebenezer Craft  
*Fairfax.*

Mr. Joseph Parmele  
Jonathan E. Parmele  
*Greensborough.*

John Ellsworth, Esq.

Mr. Aaron Farnham  
Ephraim Strong  
*Lunenburg.*

Maj. Gideon Hart

Mr. William Haywood  
John Sessions

Rev. John Willard 2

Mr. Erastus Washburn 2  
*Middlebury.*

Rev. Jeremiah Atwater,

Capt. Philip Davis

Mr. Bethuel Goodrich

Levi Hooker

William G. Hooker 2

Rev. Thomas A. Merrill

Col. Seth Storrs

Peter Starr, Esq.

Mr. John Warner  
*Putney.*

Mr. Alpheus Bugbee  
John Brown

John Campbell

James Fitch

Thomas K. Green

Simon Gilston

John Hodgkin

Isaac Palmer

John Stowers

Noah Sabin, jr.

Mrs. Mary Sargeant

Mr. Asa Washburn

Reuben Washburn

Joseph Washburn

Amasa Washburn

Phinehas White

*Rockingham.*

Mr. Peter Evans

Nath'l W. Washburn

Miss Millicent Washburn  
*Rutland.*

Rev. Heman Ball

Mr. Timothy Brockway

Deac. Timo. Boardman 2

Mr. Timo. Boardman, jr.

Samuel W. Boardman

Elijah Boardman

Charles G. Boardman

Isaac Chatterton

Deac. Wait Chatterton

Mr. Rufus Deland

William Dennison

Rev. Lemuel Haynes

Capt. Oliver Harmon

Mr. Asa Hale  
 Levi Moses  
 Slias Pratt, jr.  
 Solomon Purdy  
 Deac. Ebenezer Pratt  
 Mr. Benajah G. Roots  
 Isaac Southworth  
 Jabez Ward  
*Westminster.*  
 Dr. Jonathan Badger  
 Mr. Caleb Clapp  
 Mrs. Elizabeth Erwin  
 Mr. John Grant 2  
 Amos Holbrook  
 Eleazer May  
 John Morse  
 Jabez Paine 2  
 Jonathan A. Phipper  
 Dea. Grindal Raynolds  
 Rev. Sylvester Sage  
 Dea. John Sessions  
 Mr. James Upham  
 Miss Hannah Washburn

## CONNECTICUT.

*Berlin.*

Rev. Jonathan Bird  
 Mr. Edmund Boldero  
 Eli Barns  
 Ebenezer Bishop  
 Matthew Clark  
 Abel Clark  
 Daniel Dunbar Esq.  
 Mr. James Francis  
 Elijah Francis  
 John Goodrich  
 Joseph Galpin  
 Elijah Hart

Stephen Hart  
 Ames Hosford, Esq.  
 Rev. Evan Johns  
 Mr. James North  
 Samuel Porter, 2d.  
 Roger Riley  
 Phinehas Squire  
 Jedidiah Sage  
 Walter D. Smith  
 Rev. John Smalley, D. D.  
 Mr. Adna Stanley  
 Noah Stanley  
 Timothy Stanley  
 Oliver Stanley  
 Gad Stanley  
 Miss. Abigail Smith  
 Rev. Benoni Upson  
*Bristol.*  
 Mr. Ashael Barns  
 Samuel Brooks  
 Miss Rosanna Birdsley  
 Rev. Giles H. Cowles  
 Mr. Seth Hart  
 Benjamin Hart  
 Dea. Bryan Hooker  
 Col. Grandison Iyes  
 Mr. Eli Lewis  
 Roger Lewis  
 David Lewis  
 Noah Lewis  
 Doc. Titus Meriman  
 Mr. Asa Upson  
*Burlington.*  
 Miss Catharine Barns  
 Mr. Joel Dorman  
 Zebulon Frisbie  
 John Gillet  
 Ard Hart  
 Augustus Hitchcock

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jeremiah Griswold         | Israel Bunnell        |
| Luther Humphrey 2         | Burrage Beach, Esq.   |
| Simeon Hart, Esq.         | Mr. Perry Cook        |
| Mrs. Mary Hotchkiss       | Thomas T. Cornwall    |
| Rev. Jonathan Miller      | Asahel Chittendon     |
| Rev. Joshua Perry         | Rev. John Foot        |
| Mr. John P. Treadwell 2   | Rev. Oliver Hitchcock |
| Miss Lucy Strong          | Mr. Rufus Hitchcock   |
| <i>Canaan.</i>            | Silas Hitchcock       |
| Rev. Pitkin Cowles        | Roger Hitchcock       |
| Rev. Charles Prentice.    | Andrew Hull, jr.      |
| <i>Canton.</i>            | Stephen Ives          |
| Mr. Darius Case           | Mr. Gold G. Norton    |
| Jesse Case                | John Peck             |
| Jacob Foot, jr.           | Lent H. Perkins       |
| George Humphrey           | Samuel Talmage        |
| Asher Humphrey            | Lucius Tuttle         |
| Alvin Humphrey            | <i>Colchester.</i>    |
| Arnold P. Humphrey        | Rev. Ezra S. Ely      |
| Rev. Jeremiah Hallock     | <i>Colebrook.</i>     |
| Mr. Frederick Moses       | Rev. Chauncey Lee     |
| William Stone             | <i>Durham.</i>        |
| Rufus Fuller              | Mr. Hezekiah Baldwin  |
| William Wilcox            | Nathan O. Camp        |
| <i>Chatham.</i>           | Hamlet Coe            |
| Mr. Samuel Allen          | Ezra Camp             |
| Jonathan Brown            | Elah Camp             |
| Daniel Cruttenden         | David Camp            |
| Thomas Eddy               | Asher Coe             |
| John Polly                | John Curtis           |
| Samuel Penfield           | Samuel Hart           |
| John Payne                | Josiah Jewit          |
| Daniel Shepard            | John Johnson          |
| Rev. Cyprian Strong, D.D. | Miles Merwin          |
| Mrs. Hannah Wells         | Joel Parmelee         |
| Mr. Aaron Willcox         | Levi Parmelee         |
| <i>Cheshire.</i>          | Dan Parmelee          |
| Mr. Joseph Atwater        | Seth Seward           |
| Amos Baldwin              | Rev. David Smith      |

*Fairfield.*

Miss Mary Burr  
 Mr. Andrew Elliott  
 Stephen Fowler  
 Rev. Heman Humphrey  
 Mrs. Mary Hobart  
 Mr. David Judson  
 Rev. H. Ripley, D. D. 14  
 Miss Elizabeth Rowland  
 Catharine Wakeman

*Farmington.*

Mr. James Andrus  
 Thomas G. Alvord  
 Asa Andrews  
 Ethan A. Andrews  
 Dea. Martin Bull  
 Samuel Bishop  
 Mr. Joel Beecher  
 John Beecher  
 Augustus Bodwell  
 Nathaniel W. Bishop  
 Noadiah Bird  
 Miss Elizabeth Boardman  
 Mr. John Belden  
 Miss Lucy Cowles  
 Gen. Solomon Cowles  
 Mr. Elijah Cowles  
 Samuel Cowles, Esq.  
 Mess. H. & T. Cowles 2  
 Mr. Anson Cowles  
 Zenas Cowles  
 Rufus Cowles  
 Col. Isaac Cowles  
 Mr. William L. Cowles  
 Gad Cowles  
 Truman Cowles  
 Jeremiah Cowles  
 Jesse Cowles  
 John M. Case

Roderic Cadwe  
 Mervin Clark  
 Dan Clark  
 Salmon Clark  
 John Cook  
 Edward Chapman  
 Adna Crampton 2  
 Jesse Clark  
 Mess. J. & C. Deming  
 Mr. Thomas S. Day  
 Ira Eaton  
 Joel Fisk  
 Thomas Gridley  
 Reason Gridley  
 Ebenezer S. Gleason  
 Isaac Gridley, jr.  
 Elijah Gridley  
 Isaac Gridley  
 Erastus Gay  
 John Gridley  
 Timothy Gridley  
 Eber Gridley  
 Mrs. Rachel Gillet  
 Miss Betsey Gridley  
 Mr. Joel Hart  
 Luther Humphrey 4  
 Chauncey Hooker  
 Roger Hooker, Esq.  
 Mr. James Harrison  
 Elnathan Hooker  
 Rev. Rufus Hawley  
 Miss Patience Hotchkiss  
 Mrs. Elenor Hart  
 Mr. Josiah Hotchkiss  
 Joseph Hart  
 Ira Hooker  
 Stephen Hart  
 Joseph Hawley 2  
 Gad Hawley 2



Miss Huldah Hart	Mr. Romanta Porter
Mr. William F. Hill	Amzi Porter
Leonard Hills	Dea. Noah Porter 2
William Hills	Mr. Abel Peck
William Hart	Daniel Pratt
James Hunt	Rev. Timothy Pitkin
William S. Judd	Timothy Pitkin, jr. Esq.
Daniel Jones	<i>Member of Congress.</i>
Joshua Kilbourn	Mr. Samuel Richards
Solomon Langdon	Hosea Robbins
Elijah Lewis	Samuel Root
Seth Lewis	Salmon Root
Elias Lewis	Elijah Root
Chauncey Lusk	John Root
Mrs. Mary B. Landers	Seth Richards
Mr. Mamry Lory	Timothy Root
John Mix, Esq.	Mark Root
Mrs. Sally Mix	Isaiah Rowe
Mr. Preserved Marshall	First Eccl. Society 10
Moses Morse	Miss Mercy Scott
Jedidiah Norton	Mr. Chauncey Sweet
Reuben S. Norton	Miss Elizabeth Stedman
George Norton	Mr. Jesse Shepherd
Eli North	Salmon Stedman
Dea. Isaiah North	Thomas Smith
Mrs. Lucy North	Samuel Smith
Mr. Asa North, jr.	Joseph Selden
Miss Clarissa North	Pomroy Strong
Mr. Elijah North	Samuel Sweet
Asahel North	Luther Seymour
Eber North	Eben Thomson
Samuel North	Col. Daniel Tillotson
Rev. Noah Porter 2	Dea. Levi Thomson
Miss Chloe Porter	Mr. John Thomson
Abigail Porter	Abel Thomson
Mr. Elijah Porter	Hon. John Treadwell, Esq.
Selah Porter	Mr. Asahel Thomson
Joseph Porter	Mark Thomson
Shubael Porter	Doct. Eli Todd

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. Jonathan Thomson     | Samuel Norton           |
| Seth Wadsworth           | Alexander Norton 2      |
| Mrs. Ruth Whittlesey     | Jesse Stanley           |
| Miss Eunice Webster      | Augustus Thompson       |
| Mr. Elisha Woodruff, jr. | David Thompson          |
| Asa Wilcox               | James Thompson          |
| Bissel Woodford          | David Wadhams           |
| Miss Huldah Warren       | John Wadhams            |
| Mr. Simon Wells          | Jesse Wadhams           |
| Roger Woodford           | Moses Wadhams .         |
| Romeo Wadsworth          | <i>Granby.</i>          |
| Norman Warren            | Mr. Ferdinand Clemmons  |
| Samuel Woodford          | Library Company, S. B.  |
| Selah Woodford           | Mr. Roger Holcomb       |
| Ozem Woodruff            | Rev. Isaac Porter 2     |
| Mrs. Louis Woodruff      | Mr. William Lewis       |
| Mr. Erastus Woodruff     | <i>Greenfield.</i>      |
| Joshua Woodruff          | Mr. Elisha Bradley      |
| Reuben Woodruff          | Levi Down               |
| Solomon Woodruff         | Rev. Horace Holley      |
| Darius Woodruff          | Mr. David Hubbill       |
| Eliphalet Wadsworth      | Isaac Perry             |
| William Wadsworth        | <i>Greenwich.</i>       |
| Luke Wadsworth           | Mr. Walter Avery        |
| Elisha Woodruff          | Nathaniel Teriss        |
| Lot Woodruff 2           | William Knapp           |
| Alanson Woodruff         | Henry Lyon              |
| Romeo Welton             | Rev. Isaac Lewis, D. D. |
| Mrs. Mary Whitman        | Mr. David Lyon, jr.     |
| <i>Franklin.</i>         | Mark Mead               |
| Rev. Samuel Nott         | Ebenezer Mead           |
| Mr. John McCall          | Richard Mead            |
| <i>Goshen.</i>           | Abraham Mead            |
| Mr. Stephen Baldwin      | Zophar Mead             |
| William Brown            | Robert Mead             |
| Isaac Baldwin            | William Mead, jr.       |
| George Cook              | Daniel Mead             |
| Allen Lewis              | Peter Mead              |
| Birdsey Norton 3         | Jared Mead              |
|                          | John Meritt             |

*Guilford.*

Mr. Nathaniel Allis  
 Dea. Abraham Chittendon  
 Mr. John Conkling  
 Rev. Aaron Dutton  
 Mr. Abraham Fowler  
     Benjamin Frisbie, jr.  
 Mrs. Joanna Hand  
 Mr. Samuel Johnson, jr.  
     David Marvin  
     Theophilus Scranton  
 Jonathan Todd, Esq.  
     Chapman Warner  
     Julius Wilcox

*East Guilford.*

Rev. John Elliott.

*North Guilford.*

Rev. Thomas W. Bray  
 Library Company  
 Mr. Timothy Baldwin  
     David S. Brooks  
     Benjamin Baldwin  
     Abel Rossiter  
 Dea. Joel Rose

*Haddam.*

Mr. Ezra Brainard  
     Daniel Carter  
 Rev. David D. Field  
 Mr. David Selden  
     Elias Selden

*Hartford.*

Doct. Leonard Bacon  
 Mr. Josiah Beckwith  
     Samuel Burr  
     Oliver Boardman  
     Thomas D. Boardman  
     Oliver Boardman, jr.  
     Sherman Boardman  
     Timothy Boardman

## Russel Bunce

Aaron Colton

Doct. Mason F. Cogswell  
 Mr. Aaron Chapin  
 Thomas Chester, Esq.  
 Dea. Ezra Corning  
 Mr. Benjamin Conklin  
     Samuel C. Camp  
 Theodore Dwight, Esq.  
 Mr. Edward Danforth  
     Daniel Danforth  
     James Doolittle

Rev. Abel Flint

Mr. Caleb Goodwin

Daniel S. Gladding

Andrew Kingsbury, Esq.

Mr. Joseph Keeney

Samuel Kellogg

William Lawrence

Samuel Lawrence

James Lathrop

Hartford Library

Mr. Zechariah Mills

Gideon Morley

Enoch Perkins, Esq.

Mr. David Porter

Harry Pratt

Mrs. Ruth Patten

Mr. Anson G. Phelps

Dea. Abner Reed

Mr. Joseph Rogers

Jacob Sargeant

Normand Smith

Rev. Nathan Strong, D. D.

Dea. Thomas Tileston

Thomas S. Williams, Esq.

Mr. Thomas Wells, jr.

*West-Hartford.*

Mr. Jacob Allen

Dea. Jonathan B. Balch	Mrs. Lucy Seymour
Mr. Gideon Butler	Mr. Ashbel Seymour
Jonathan Butler	Mrs. Joanna Steel
Manning Bivins	Mr. Samuel Talcott
James Butler	Mrs. Abigail Wells
Henry Brace	Noah Webster, Esq.
Benjamin Bishop	Mr. John Whitman
Lory Brace	Samuel Whitman
William Benham	George Wells
Mrs. Rhoda Butler	<i>Hartland.</i>
Lucy Cadwell	Mr. Edmond Beach
Mr. Horace Colton	Aaron Gates, jr.
Daniel Danforth	Rev. Nathaniel Gaylord
Abijah Flagg	Mr. Stephen Goodyear
Ebenezer Faxon	Silas Hayes
Ebenezer Faxon, jr.	<i>Harwinton.</i>
Roger Francis	Mr. John Bull
Ozias Griswold	Asahel Barber
Mrs. Rachel Goodman	Reuben Bartholomew
Mr. Moses Goodman	Mrs. Polly Crandal
Miss Lucia Goodman	Mr. Newton Rossiter
Mrs. Susannah Gaylord	Samuel Sheldon 6
Mr. Thomas Goodman	Rev. Joshua Williams 3
Seth Goodwin	<i>Killingworth.</i>
Joseph Hurlburt	Rev. Josiah B. Andrews 2
William Hopkins	<i>Lisbon.</i>
William Hurlburt	Rev. Levi Nelson
Amasa Keyes, Esq.	<i>Litchfield.</i>
Miss Abigail Keyes	Rev. Dan Huntington 12
Mr. David Mason	<i>Middletown.</i>
Elisha Mix	Mr. Samuel Adkins
Pollard Merrill	Joseph Alvord
Jedidiah W. Mills	David Allen
Rev. Nathan Perkins, D. D.	Mrs. Dolly Adkins
Doct. Caleb Perkins	Mr. Oliver Baily
Nathan Perkins, jr. Esq.	William Boardman
Mr. Jesse Porter	John Bohanning
Asahel Porter	Joseph Boardman
Bavil Seymour	Samuel Bement

Mr. Elisha Coe	Jacob Johnson
William Cooper	Edward Johnson
Stephen Clay	Josiah Johnson
Daniel Crowell	Partridge Johnson
Elihu Cotton, jr.	Comfort Johnson
Lucius Cook	John Jones
Alexander Collins, Esq.	Elisha Kirby
Mr. Henry Carrington	Asabel Loomis
William Cole	Hon. Ashur Miller
Charles Curtiss	Mr. Giles Meigs
Mess. E. & W. Dunham	Jason Mildrum
Mrs. Lucy Due	Thaddeus Nichols
Mr. Tertius Dunning	Russel Porter
Richard Doud	John Pratt, Esq.
Cornwell Doud	Enoch Parsons, Esq.
Samuel Driggs	Mr. Robert Paddock
Daniel Doud	Joseph Paddock
William Danforth	Jacob Pledger
Jacob Eggleston	Matthew T. Russel, Esq.
John Fisk	Mr. Samuel B. Redfield
Ebenezer Gilbert	Phinehas Ranney
Gale Goodwin	Hezekiah Rice
Samuel Gill	Ebenezer Robberts, 2d.
George Gear	Mrs. Anna Rich
Joseph Gilbert, jr.	Col. Lemuel Stoors
Rev. Enoch Huntington	Mr. Wm. Southmayd, jr.
Hon. Stephen T. Hosmer	Allen Southmayd
Mr. Micah Hubbard	Timothy Southmayd
Nehemiah Hubbard, jr.	Samuel Southmayd
Joseph Hubbard, 2d.	Giles Southmayd, jr.
Isaac Hubbard	Nathan Strong
Thomas Hobby	William Scovil
William Hart	Mrs. Barzillai Sage
Jacob Hall	Mr. Obed Stow
Thomas Hall	Daniel Starr
John Hinsdale	Miss Alice Stow
James Hopkins	Doc. Ebenezer Tracy
Lemuel Higbie	Mr. Hervey Treadway
Thomas Johnson	Gershom Thayer

Samuel Watkinson	Nehemiah Merrill
John R. Watkinson	Jonathan Marsh
Isaac Webber	Phinehas Merrill
Samuel Wetmore	Selleck Merrill
Elisha Wetmore	Roger Mills
Stephen Wetmore	Frederic Marsh
Benjamin Williams	Simeon Newel
Josiah Williams	Roger Olmsted
<i>Milford.</i>	Dea. Stephen Pitkin,
Rev. Bezaleel Pinneo 7	Mr. Stephen Pitkin, jr.
<i>Montville.</i>	Seth Spencer
Rev. Abishai Alden	Miss Matilda Spencer
<i>New-Hartford.</i>	Mr. Chauncey Seymour
Hon. Aaron Austin	Noah Seymour
Montgomery Austin, Esq.	Elijah Strong, jr.
Mrs. Polly Adams	Harvey Sadd
Mr. Roswell Austin	Chauncey Sadd
Dea. John Brown	Isaac Steel
Doct. Thomas Brinsmaid	Isaac Watson
Mr. William Cook	Jeremiah Watson
Dea. Job Curtis	Elijah G. Wells
Mr. Joseph Cowles	<i>New-Haven.</i>
Theodore Cowles	Mess. Beers & Howe 6
Martin Driggs	Mr. John Bulkley
Elijah Goodwin	Rev. Timothy Dwight, D.D.
Asa Goodwin	Mr. Sereno E. Dwight
Phinehas Holcomb	Jeremiah Day 2
Phinehas Holcomb, jr.	Jeremiah Evarts
John Handerson	Eleazar Foster
Mark Hamlin	James Gilbert
Zerah Hinman	James Goodrich
Rev. Amasa Jerome	Jonathan Maltby
Mr. Michael Kellogg	David A. Sherman
Elias Kellogg	Elias Stillwell
Thomas Lee	Ebenezer Townsend
John Marsh	<i>New London.</i>
Ashbel Marsh	Jed Huntington, Esq. 3
Joseph Merrill	Mr. Chester Kimbal
Joseph Merrill, 2d.	



<i>Norwich.</i>	Asa Barnes
Rev. Joseph Strong	Levi Barnes
<i>Preston.</i>	John Booth
Rev. Levi Hart, D. D.	Enos Clark
<i>Salisbury.</i>	Timothy Clark
Rev. Joseph W. Crossman	Daniel Clark
<i>Saybrook.</i>	Solomon Case
Rev. Thomas Rich	Leveret Curtis
<i>Simsbury.</i>	Elihu Carter
Mr. Calvin Barber	Allen Clark
Dr. John Bestor	James C. Curtis
Mrs. Vina Buel	Marons Curtis
Miss Ama Cornish	Lucas Curtis
Mr. Elisha Cornish	Cornelius Dunham
George Cornish	Cornelius Dunham, jr.
Thomas Case	Harvey Dunham
Bartholomew Case	Dea. Benjamin Dutton
Grandison Case	Mr. Asahel Evans
Philander Case	Miss Velina Hart
Stephen Goodrich	Mr. Timothy Hart
Dorithius Humphrey	Abihud Hemmingway
Dudley Humphrey	Jude Hart
Oliver Phelps	Fosdick Harrison 2
Eliud Fuller	Col. Samuel Hart
William Mather	Mr. Timothy Lewis
Michael Moses	Lemuel Lewis
Samuel Scott	Giles Langdon
Rev. Samuel Stebbins	Timothy Lee
Mr. B. H. Wilcox	Asahel Langdon
<i>Southington.</i>	Jesse Lewis
Mr. Lemuel Andrews	Selah Lewis
Arnold Atwater	Job Lewis 2
Elisha D. Andrews	Roswell Moore
Josiah Andrews	Dea. Pomeroy Newel
Jonathan Andrews	Mr. Ashbel Newel
Samuel Barnes	Isaac Newel
Selah Barnes	Amos Newel
William Barnett	Martin Potter
Ichabod Bradley	D. Peck & W. Roper

Rev. William Robinson	Rev. Samuel J. Mills
Mr. Harvey Smith.	Dea. Ebenezer Miller
Artemas Root	<i>Wethersfield.</i>
Ambrose Sloson	Miss Rhoda Andrews
A. Tubbs & W. Tisdale	Rev. Joshua Belden
Amos Upson	Joab Brace
Freeman Upson	Col. Ezekiel P. Belden
Samuel Woodruff, Esq.	Mr. F. L. Belden
Mr. Philemon Woodruff	Elisha Boardman
Bushnell Woodruff	Joseph Belden
Jotham Woodruff	Miss Laura Boardman
Jason Woodruff	Mary W. Boardman
Ashbel Woodruff	Eliza Boardman
Jonathan Walklee	Emiline F. Boardman
Roger Whittlesey, Esq.	Thankful Blin
<i>Stamford.</i>	Mr. Levi Butler
Mrs. Abigail White	Levi Churchil, 2d.
<i>Torrington.</i>	Stephen Chester, Esq.
Mr. Joseph Allen	Mr. William J. McCarter
Joseph Allyn, jr.	Samuel Churchel
Dea. William Bostwick	Jacob Dix
Mr. Wait Beach	John Daw
Elijah Cowles	Levi Deming
Curtis Egleston	Calvin Dodge
Rev. Alexander Gillet 2	Miss. Dimes Deming
Mr. Nathan Gillet	Mr. James Fortune
Abel Hinsdale	James Francis
Mrs. Rebecca Hodges	Mrs Esther Goodrich
Sibel Lyman	Mr. Isaac Goodrich
Mr. Harvey Palmer	Daniel Hatch
Benjamin Phelps	Moses Hurlburt
Eli Richards	John Hurlburt
Elisha Smish, Esq.	Martin Kellogg
Guy Wolcott	Bezalcel Latimer
Lyman Wetmore	David Lowrey
Giles Ward	Mrs. Mary Mitchel
Amos Wilson, jr.	Doc. Abner Mosely
<i>Torrington.</i>	Rev. John Marsh, D. D.
William Battell, Esq.	Mr. Amasa Morgan

Doc. George Olcott  
 Mr. Justus Riley  
 Maj. Timothy Russel  
 Mr. John B. Ripley  
 Mrs. Elizabeth Romans  
 Mr. George Stilman  
   Allen Stilman  
   Joseph Stilman  
   Ebenezer Stilman  
   Otis Stilman

Dea. Timothy Stilman

Mrs. Prudence Treat

Mr. Moses Tryon

  William Talcott

  Joseph Wells

  Elijah Wells

  Origen Wells

  Lemuel Whittlesey

Mrs. Jemima Wells

Sam'l W. Williams, Esq.

John Williams, Esq.

Ezekiel Williams, Esq. 2

Miss. Mary Willard

*Winchester.*

Rev. Archibald Basset

  James Beach

Mr. James Boyd

  William Bunnell

  Horace Case

  Theodore Goodwin

Horace Higley, Esq.

Mr. Bissel Hinsdale

  Elizur Hinsdale

  Levi Platt

Dea. Alpha Rockwell

Solomon Rockwell, Esq.

Mr. Roger Root, jr.

*Windsor.*

Rev. David Austin

Mr. Thomas Barker

  Amos Gillet

  Luther Fitch

Rev. William F. Miller

  Henry A. Rowland

*Woodbury.*

Rev. Noah Benedict

Mr. David Curtis

NEW-YORK.

*Albany.*

Mr. Charles Beckman

  John Boardman 2

  Chester Bulkley

  H. W. Bulkley

  N. B. Basset

  E. H. Backus

  Abraham Eights

  John Gray

  John I. Guest

  E. Hatfield

  Isaac Hatton

  James Hodge

  John Maley

  William M'Leland

  David Olmsted

Rev. John B. Romeyn 2

Mr. Eliphalet Steele

  Samuel Whiting

  Elbert Willet

  General Windall

  Charles R. Webster

*New-York.*

Rev. Selah S. Woodhull 2

## NEW-JERSEY.

*Kingston.*

Mr. Robert Bayley

John Galie 2

*New-Brunswick.*

Mr. John Bayard 3

David Budd

M. J. Bayard

Isaac V. Brown

Abram Blauvelt

Miss Catharine Buttle

Mr. John F. Clark

Peter Clark

William P. Clark

Miss Hannah Clark

Mr. Ira Condict

David Cowfort

Phinehas Cannar 3

Alche Degraw

Miss Catharine Dunham

Amy Van Dike

Lydia Van Dike

Ann Eastburn

Mr. Robert Eastburn

Miss Mary Ellis

Mr. Jacob Fisher

Alpheus Freeman

Miss Eliza Johnston

Mr. M. A. Kirkpatrick

William Lawson 5

Miss Mary Leston

Mr. John Neilson 5

Ephenia Patterson 2

Miss Sarah Richmond

Ann Richmond

Mary Richmond

Jane Scott

Lavinia A. Scott

Mr. Moses Scott

H. Scott

Miss Mary D. Smith

Mr. John Woodhull

George S. Woodhull

*Princeton.*

Mr. Samuel Bayard 3

Peter Bogart

Erkuries Beatty

Joseph Campbell

John Van Cleve

Eli Cooly

Mrs. Margaret Cozine

Mr. Mathew G. Ferguson

Miss Hetty Gan

Mr. John Gifford

James Hamilton

John Hamilton

Andrew Hunter, s. t. p. 5

Mr. Peregrine Januier

Thomas Jolinson

Enos Kelsey

John Maclean

Stephen Morford

Zebulon Morford

Andrew M. Makin

James Moore

Alexander Monteith

John Napton

David Nevins

Peter P. Nevins

John Passage

James Patterson

John Robertson

Perez Rowley

Samuel S. Smith, D.D. 3

Miss Lydia Stille

Elizabeth Fisher Smith

Mr. Ebenezer Stockton

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Richard Stockton        | Mrs. M. Barksdale          |
| Jacob Stryker           | Hon. Judge E. H. Bay, Esq. |
| Miss Ruth Stryker       | Mrs. Catharine A. Banks    |
| Mr. William Thompson    | Miss E. Brailsford         |
| John Thompson           | Capt. Jared Bunce          |
| Cornelius Terhune       | Mrs. A. Budd               |
| Robert Voorkees         | John Brownlee, Esq. 10     |
| John Wilson             | Mr. Samuel S. Brown        |
| <i>Raritan Landing.</i> | Benjamin Boyd, Esq. 6      |
| Mr. William Applegale   | Mess. J. & C. Bulow 10     |
| Ellen Clark             | Mr. Robert Blakely 10      |
| Miss Ursula Dunham      | Mrs. Susan Blair           |
| Mr. William French      | S. Bee                     |
| John Pool. 3            | Eliza Bee                  |
|                         | Miss Eliza Barksdale       |
|                         | Maria Bacot                |
|                         | Harriett Bacot             |
|                         | Eliza Bacot                |
|                         | Mrs. Caroline Ball 2       |
|                         | Mr. John Bennet            |
|                         | Mrs. Ann K. Bennet         |
|                         | Mary Berney                |
|                         | Thomas Bennet, senr. Esq.  |
|                         | Mr. William S. Bennet      |
|                         | Mrs. Ann T. Bennet         |
|                         | Bonneau                    |
|                         | Miss Bonneau               |
|                         | Mrs. Eliza C. Cochran 2    |
|                         | Miss Mary Capers           |
|                         | Martha Capers              |
|                         | Mrs. Eleanor M. Cohen 2    |
|                         | Mr. Jonathan Coit 2        |
|                         | Mrs. Ann Croft             |
|                         | Geo. Chisolm, Esq. 2       |
|                         | Mrs. E. C. Courtney 2      |
|                         | Eliza S. Cleary            |
|                         | Mary Cochran               |
|                         | Harriett Cochran           |
|                         | Miss Letitia Cochran       |
- PENNSYLVANIA.
- Philadelphia.*
- Mr. W. W. Woodward 20
- SOUTH CAROLINA.
- Charleston.*
- Mr. William Aiken 5
- Mrs. Elizabeth Ashe
- Mr. Samuel Ashe
- Jacob Axson
- Mrs. Ann Axson
- Mr. Samuel E. Axson
- Kinsey Burden, Esq.
- Mrs. Mary L. Beach
- Miss Mary Beach
- Rev. Nathaniel Bowen 3
- Mrs. Eliza W. Burnet
- Miss Mary W. Barksdale
- Thomas Barksdale, Esq.
- Mrs. Sabina Bonneau
- Miss Mary Barksdale
- Sarah Barksdale

Mrs. Eliza Crocker	Mrs. Robert R. Gibbes
Cæsarine Clifford	Sarah Gibbes
Maria Cogdell	Catharine Gadsden
Jas. Cox	Mr. Edmond Green
Mr. Chs. Cunningham 3	Mrs. Mary C. Gregorie 3
Rich. Cunningham 12	Eliza Grimball
Mrs. Elizabeth DeSaussure	Eliza S. Glover
Mary DeSaussure	Messrs N. & F. Gist 5
Ann Darrell	Mr. Robert Geddes 5
Isc. Mott Dart	Mrs. Elizabeth B. Hatter
Ann D'Oyley	Miss Eliza Huxham
Mr. Samuel Dickson	Mrs. Eliza Hayne
James Davidson 10	Miss Susan B. Hayne
Mrs. DeLaire	Hannah Hamilton
Mary Ann Dewes	Mrs. Hunter
Miss Sarah Dickinson	Danl. Hall
Thomas Doughty, Esq. 3	Hannah Hamlin
Mrs. Mary Doughty 3	Mr. John Haslett
Mary C. DuPont	Miss Mary Huchins
Sophia Dulles	Mr. John Hichborn
Miss Ann Edmonds	Mrs. Eliza Hichborn
George Edwards, Esq.	Master D. C. Hichborn
Mrs. Elizabeth Edwards	Mrs. Sarah Hollingshead 2
Mary M. Edwards	Eliza Hazlehurst
Barnard Elliott	Eliza Holmes
Miss Mary Edwards	Eliza Hardy
Mrs. Edwards, sen.	Hannah Heyword
James Fisher, Esq. 3	Miss Jalielt Hall
Miss Catharine Futerell	Mr. John Herron
Timothy Ford, Esq.	Micah Jenkins Esq.
Mrs. Ann M. Ford	Mr. H. Inglesby
Rev. Dr. Richard Furman	Thomas Jones Esq.
Mrs. Fergurson	Mrs. Abigail Jones
Mess. Flemming & King 10	Mr. Paul T. Jones
Mrs. Ann Graves	Mrs. Mary Jones
Wilson Glover	Mary Irvine
Grimke 2	Miss Eliza Jenkins
Robert R. Gibbes, Esq.	Hon. Judge William Johnson,
Lewis L. Gibbes, Esq.	son, Esq.



- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mrs. Dr. Johnson          | James Mathews, Esq.            |
| Rev. Dr. Isaac S. Keith 8 | Dr. Thomas H. M'Calla 3        |
| Mr. Edward Kennedy 2      | Mrs. Susan M'Pherson 2         |
| Mrs. Alice Legaré         | Mary W. Motte                  |
| Martha Lequeux            | Mary Mouatt                    |
| James Legaré, Esq. 2      | Martha Ann Mathews 2           |
| Thomas Legaré, Esq.       | Mr. John M'Dowell 2            |
| Doct. Daniel Legaré       | Miss Eliza Nelms               |
| Mrs. Eliza Martha Legaré  | Mrs. John North                |
| Sarah Legaré              | Lewis Ogier, Esq.              |
| Mr. Joseph D. Legaré      | Mrs. Susan Ogier               |
| Miss Ann Legaré           | Miss Martha Ogier              |
| Mary D. Legaré            | Jane Ogier                     |
| Mrs. Mary S. Legaré       | Master John Ogier              |
| Miss Eliza C. Legaré      | Thomas Ogier, Esq.             |
| Mrs. Elizabeth Lightwood  | Mrs. Sarah Ogier               |
| Ewd. T. Lightwood, Esq. 2 | Osborn                         |
| Mrs. H. F. Lovell 2       | Miss Charlotte Osborn          |
| S. B. Lowndes             | Mrs. Sarah Parker              |
| H. Lesesne                | George Parker, Esq.            |
| Sarah Lawrence            | Mr. Job Palmer                 |
| Susanna Lehre 2           | Miss Sarah A. Palmer           |
| Mr. Daniel Latham jr.     | Rev. William Percy             |
| Abraham Markley 6         | William Payne, Esq. 3          |
| Mrs. Ann Marr             | Mrs. Maria M. Payne            |
| Thomas Martin, Esq.       | Hugh Patterson, Esq.           |
| Mrs. Charlotte Martin     | Mrs. Catharine Patterson       |
| Susanna Martin            | Mrs. Wm. Price ( <i>Orange</i> |
| Miss Eliza Martin         | <i>Street</i> )                |
| Susan Martin              | William Price ( <i>King</i>    |
| Mr. John Martin           | <i>Street</i> )                |
| Robert Maxwell, Esq. 2    | Mr. Washington Potter 2        |
| Mr. Nathaniel Maxwell 3   | Mrs. Jane Prioleau             |
| Mrs. Mary Mathews         | Miss Mary Price                |
| Mr. Samuel Maverick       | Mrs. Sarah P. Parker           |
| Stephen Mazyck, Esq.      | Elizabeth H. Parker            |
| Mrs. Mary Mazyck,         | E. R. Parker                   |
| Mr. John Mouatt 2         | Martha Parker                  |
| Mrs. Frances Mathews 2    | Miss Rachel B. Parker          |

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mrs. Wm. Parker jun.      | Rebekah Stiles            |
| Mr. Archibald Pagan 5     | Mrs. (Col.) Skirving 2    |
| Mrs. Quash 2              | William Skirving 2        |
| Miss Amelia Rose          | T. R. Smith               |
| Mr. John Reid             | Martha Savage             |
| Miss Rutledge             | Mr. Anthony Simons        |
| Dr. David Ramsy           | Mrs. Sturgis 2            |
| Mrs. S. Russell           | Eliza Shrewsbury          |
| Miss Alica H. Russell     | Miss Mary Scott           |
| Sarah Russell             | Hannah S. Swinton 3       |
| Mrs. Mary Susan Roach     | Margaret Swinton 2        |
| Francis Rivers sen. Esq.  | Mrs. Swinton              |
| Mess. S. & G. Robertson 6 | Miss Eliza S. Swinton     |
| Robertson & Long 10       | Mrs. Roger Smith          |
| Josiah Smith, Esq.        | Ann Alica Stock           |
| George Smith, Esq.        | Dr. Thomas Stock          |
| Mrs. Eliza Smith          | William S. Smith, Esq.    |
| Miss Mary Smith           | Mrs. J. L. Smith          |
| Sarah E. Smith            | Margaret Seabrook         |
| Mrs. Eliza Stowe          | Miss Ruth Savage          |
| Sarah C. Simmons          | Mrs. Ann Tennent          |
| Dr. William S. Stevens    | Susanna Turner            |
| Mrs. Hannah Stevens       | Mary L. Thomas            |
| Miss Mary Stevens         | Miss Eliza L. Thomas      |
| Susan E. Stevens          | Mrs. Caroline S. Thayer 2 |
| Loisa B. Seabrook         | Martha A. Thompson        |
| Master Saml. N. Stevens   | Ann Toomer                |
| Mrs. Susanna Smilie       | Mr. Joshua Toomer         |
| Mr. John T. Shubrick      | Mrs. Eliza. Y. Thomson    |
| Mrs. Mary Shubrick        | Mr. John Jacob Tschudy 2  |
| Ann Snowden               | Mrs. Euginia Thomson      |
| Jane Smith                | Mr. Stephen Thomas        |
| Mr. Thomas Y. Smith       | Mrs. M. Turpin 2          |
| Morton W. Smith           | Edith Waring              |
| Mrs. Middleton Smith      | Miss Ann Waring           |
| Keating Simons, Esq.      | Susan Smith Waring        |
| Mrs. K. Simons            | Mrs. Mary Waring          |
| T. Simmons                | Miss A. D. V. Waring      |
| S. R. Simmons 2           | Mrs. Mary J. Waring       |

Mrs. Susanna A. Ward	Dr. James E. B. Finley 24
Woodrop	Mrs. Hester Gregorie
Charles Warham	Martha Guerard 2
Ann Wagner	Saml. Lawrence sen. Esq.
Miss Ann Ward	Mr. Stephen Lawrence
Mrs. S. Wragg 2	Mrs. Mary Means
Sarah Yonge	Mr. Paul Paulison
Margaret A. Young	Rev. Benj. M. Palmer 4
Mr. Jeremiah A. Yates 2	Mrs. Margaret Stock 2
D. Yates	Miss Mary Willson
Mrs. Elizabeth You	<i>Georgetown.</i>
Antoinette You	Savage Smith, Esq.
Mary Yeadon	<i>John's-Island.</i>
<i>Beaufort.</i>	Rev. William Clarkson
Mrs. Ann Agnew	<i>James'-Island.</i>
Col. Robert Barnwell 5	Rev. Thomas Price
Mrs. Mary Barnwell	Mrs. Esther Rivers
Elizabeth Barnwell 5	John Todd, Esq.
Ann Barnwell 2	<i>St. Bartholomews.</i>
Sarah Barnwell	Mrs. Rebekah Bellinger
Miss Ann Barnwell	Eliza Girardeau
Eliza Barnwell	Rev. Loammi Floyd 4
Mrs. Eliza Bythewood	<i>St. Georgies.</i>
Mary Colcock 2	Thomas Smith sen. Esq.
Sarah Ellis	Mrs. Ann Waring 2

---

ADDITIONS.

Doc. Daniel Hopkins, *Hartford*, (Con.)  
 John Thompson, do.  
 Mr. Ebenezer Bolles, *Litchfield*.  
 Mr. Charles Goodrich, jr. *Pittsfield*, (Mass.)

